

Digital Creative Arts

THE MAGAZINE FOR CREATIVE COMPUTER USERS

ISSUE TWENTY ONE

Windows / Mac

MAKE YOUR MOVIE

(AND YOUR NAME) Low-budget to no-budget, we reveal how digital lets you shoot, edit and distribute

**BLUESCREEN
ON A BUDGET**
THE SECRET'S
OUT ON PAGE 80

THE THIRD DIMENSION

REVEALED! How to mix 2D and 3D in Photoshop to produce amazing artwork



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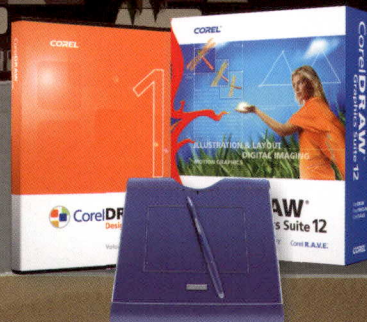
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Lights, camera, action!



If you've ever dreamt of wearing jeans and a baseball cap all day (everyday), yelling 'Cut' from the comfort of a deckchair, or even putting 'Director' on the occupation slot of your passport, then this is the issue for you. Starting on page 26, we reveal all you need to know about angles and actors, scripts and set-ups, FX and festivals.

The digital revolution means that professional quality is available from your desktop, which allows you to get your work out there and your name made. You shouldn't expect your short to be playing at the multiplex by next summer, but it can get you your big break. And what you make of that is entirely up to you. If you're interested, make sure you visit page 80 too, where the myth that you need a massive budget to do decent bluescreen work is well and truly shattered.

Meanwhile, Photoshop fans should rush straight to page 38, where Dave Needham reveals how you can mix 2D and 3D with incredible impact. Next under the microscope is the idea of brand design on page 48, and there's also two amazing Illustrator workshops for you, which start on pages 58 and 66 respectively. There's also a lesson in character animation to go with the MotionBuilder PLE on the CD, and you'll find that on page 86.

Finally, I'm sad to say that this will be my last issue of *Digital Creative Arts*. I've been on the magazine since it launched, and I can honestly say that I'll miss it, as well as our loyal and creative readers. Despite all the arguments about the tape that attaches the CD to the magazine, it's been a lot of fun. Nevertheless, times change, and exciting things are afoot for the magazine. Stay tuned!

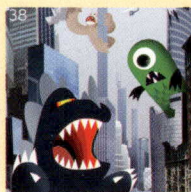
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ARTISTS THIS ISSUE



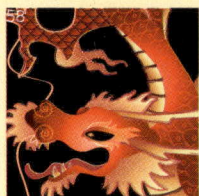
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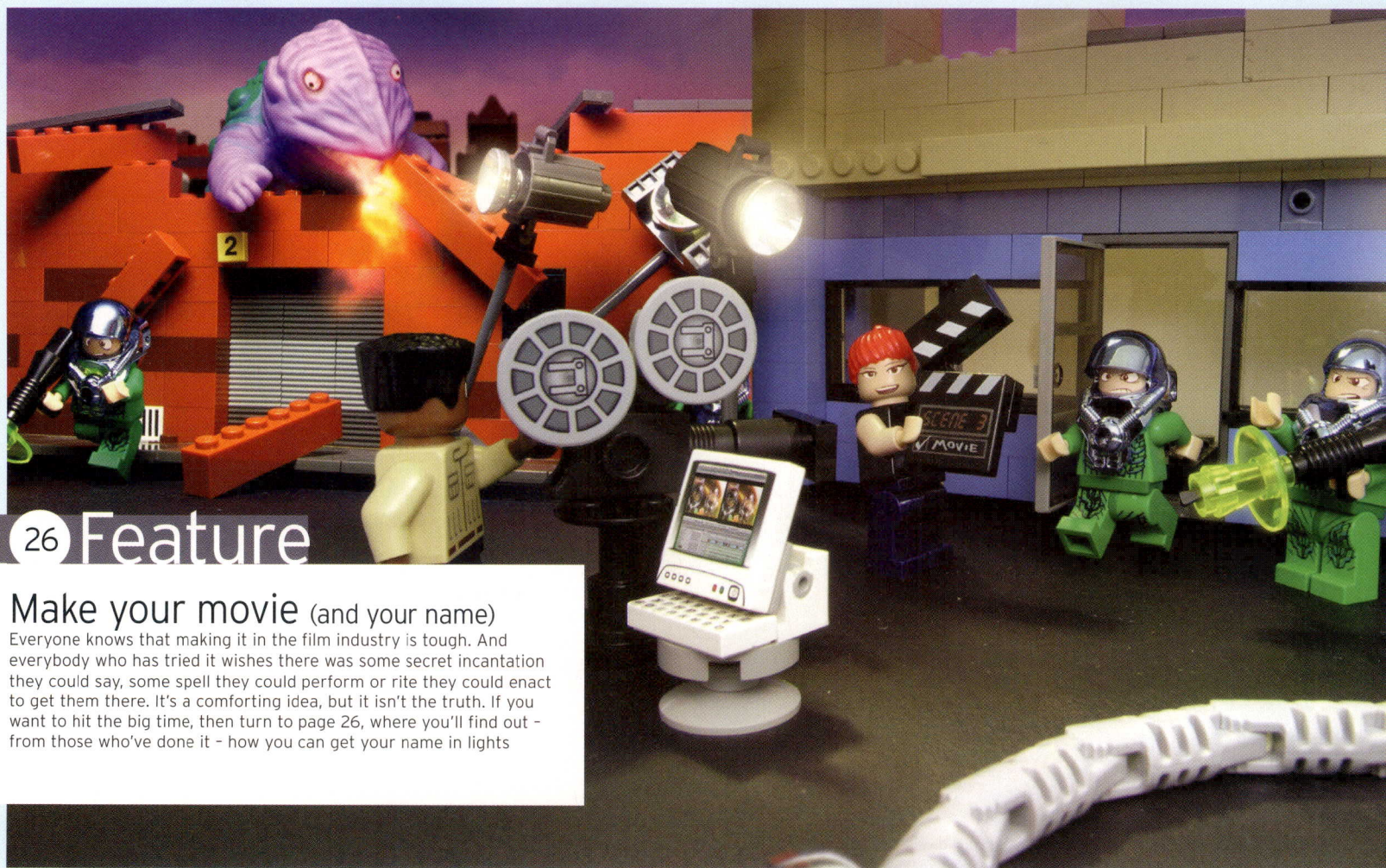
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26 Feature

Make your movie (and your name)

Everyone knows that making it in the film industry is tough. And everybody who has tried it wishes there was some secret incantation they could say, some spell they could perform or rite they could enact to get them there. It's a comforting idea, but it isn't the truth. If you want to hit the big time, then turn to page 26, where you'll find out - from those who've done it - how you can get your name in lights

Inside secrets

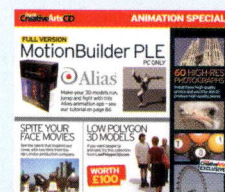
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Find out what happens within the Wonka factory gates, as we talk chocolate, children and the pros and cons of CG Oompa-Loompas

20 The Interview: Steve Bendelack

He's helmed lots of top comedy TV shows - including *Little Britain* - and now this talented director is making movies. He spoke to us about *The League of Gentlemen's Apocalypse*

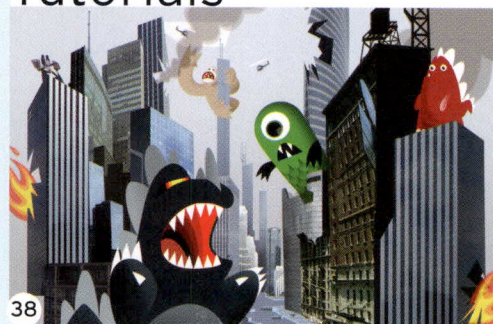




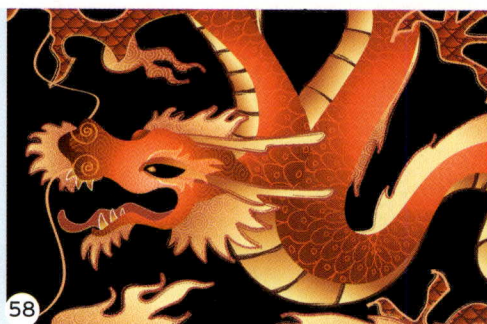
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- MotionBuilder PLE
- 3D models collection
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- 60 high-res images

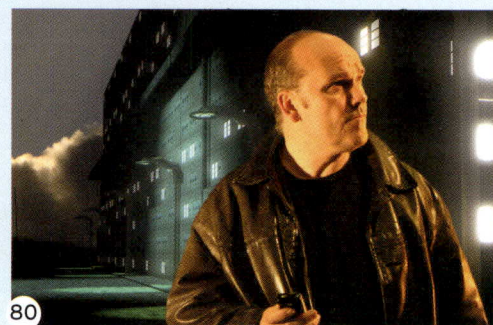
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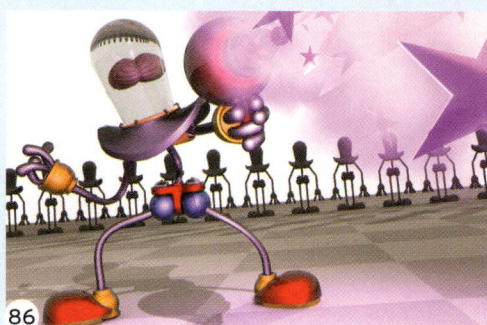
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38 Mix 2D and 3D in Photoshop

Photoshop can handle a massive range of files, formats and styles, and here we find out how you can use this compatibility to expand your art horizons and design capabilities

58 Design your own dragon

Design your own fire-breather, as we explore how to make the most of what Illustrator has to offer. Plus, find out how to tackle fiddly bits - like scales - with grace and precision

80 Bluescreen on a budget

Forget about shooting scripts that stick to the available locations. With the power of bluescreen closer than you think, you can take your projects wherever you care to go

86 Animate with MotionBuilder

With the Alias Personal Learning Edition on the CD, it's about time you mastered the delicate art of character animation with MotionBuilder. We have all you need to know

Portfolio



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74 Portfolio

We've managed to fit three digital artists into Portfolio this issue - find out how on page 74!

78 University showcase

Another issue of *Digital Creative Arts*, another incredible creativity course strutting its funky stuff. This issue, we take a peek at Falmouth

93 Reviews

There's a whole host of new purchases to consider making after you've read this issue's Reviews, not least the selection of DVD writers you'll find burning a hole in page 100



DESIGN & PUBLISHING



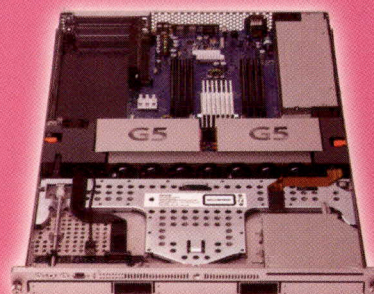
DIGITAL AUDIO & VIDEO



DIGITAL IMAGING



BUSINESS SOLUTIONS



experience the new MacExpo

MacExpo moves to a new larger venue for 2005 – **Olympia National Hall, Kensington** – and has created four themed experiences for visitors, each with a central theatre packed with presentations and demonstrations.



Learn how to make music like the professionals and get serious about digital video, create great shorts and promos, manage your video assets.



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Pick up all the latest business hardware and software solutions on the Mac platform and hear case studies at the FileMaker theatre and workshops.

The new MacExpo is also packed with consumer attractions and events focusing on your digital lifestyle, with dedicated areas where you can optimize and accessorize your iPod, an enhanced Games Experience featuring the latest games and equipment, a Digital Lounge, a Music stage and much much more...

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DIGITAL ARTS
DIARYAUG
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Macworld 2005
Everything Mac-related comes together in Massachusetts today, so head to Boston for the news

AUG
11

SICAF 2005
The Seoul International Cartoon and Animation Festival kicks off today with top talent on show

AUG
15

Action/Cut
This short film festival comes to a head in Cali today with entrants from around the world

AUG
20

Topanga Film Festival 2005
This is an arena for people to share their work, as features, shorts and animation are all on show

AUG
23

London International Film Festival
The second annual film fest kicks off in London today, see www.liaf.co.uk for what will be showing

AUG
29

Eurographics Animation Theatre Competition
Held in Dublin, this event is open to all types of animator and movie; a 1000 euro prize is offered

SEPT
01

Screenplay Festival
Hosted on the web, this seeks out new talent and give undiscovered writers the chance to get noticed

SEPT
02

Telluride Film Festival
Colorado USA is the venue for this indie festival, open to professionals and amateurs alike

SEPT
06

Fantoche 2005
The Swiss CG animation festivals is huge; get down to the show and then head out on the piste

SEPT
09

Playmakaz Contest
Aspiring game developers take note, the top prize is a \$50,000 game contract with Zango

DIGITAL DESIGN

Apple announces new lines and compatibility

BIG THINGS ARE ON THE HORIZON, AS APPLE CONTINUES TO FLOURISH, AND CHANGES CHIPS TO KEEP CONSUMERS HAPPY

Apple has announced it will be switching to Intel chips in 2006. The company is also going to be launching a swathe of new products and services for the summer, after a year of remarkable success.

Most noticeably for the style-conscious Apple consumer will be the changes to the already iconic iPod. The plan is to combine the original iPod model with the more recent iPod photo, giving birth to an affordable photo viewer and music player. This will have a retail price of £200 for the 20Gb model. The iPod has been the biggest success story for Apple in recent years, and with a constant flow of new designs and accessories, it now looks set to stay on top as the world's most high-profile portable music player.

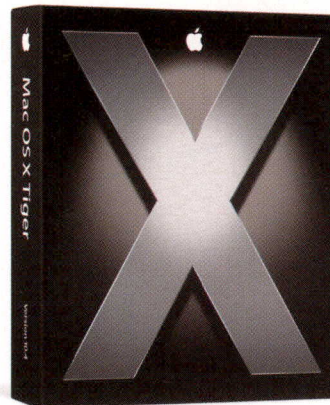
The new iPod casting feature has been a revelation, allowing users to download radio shows direct to their iPod for listening on the move. As the US iTunes store hurtles toward 500m downloads (and the UK to 50m), it appears the pay-per-song download

culture is far from a flash in the pan either. It's also been a big factor in bridging the Mac/Windows divide, as PC users have wanted to get in on the iPod action.

The new operating system, Mac OS X Tiger, has also sold in excess of two million copies since its release this year. "The response to Tiger is off the charts," said Steve Jobs, Apple's CEO. "Critics are raving, customers are delighted and developers are creating hundreds of widgets and applications that take advantage of Tiger's incredible innovations such as Spotlight, Dashboard and Automator," he added.

"With the new technologies in Tiger, we worked closely with Apple to ensure that Office 2004 customers would benefit by making it even easier to search, share and manage information," says Roz Ho, General Manager of the Macintosh

Business Unit, Microsoft Corporation. "Whether searching for an Office 2004 document using Spotlight or synchronising data in Entourage to another supported device, the



DIGITAL VIDEO

Olympic glory for London and New Moon

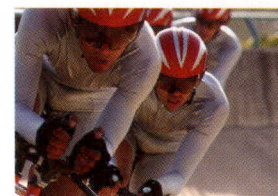
CINEMATIC GEMS HELP THE CAPITAL TO OLYMPIC VICTORY

London-based production company New Moon played a key role in helping the capital secure the Olympic Games in 2012. The team was responsible for creating two films, *Make Britain Proud - London 2012* and *Inspiration*, which were crucial to the bid, as both were shown on the final day of selection at the IOC Committee presentation in Singapore.

Fighting stiff competition from the New York film directed by Steven Spielberg and the Paris film directed by Luc Besson, Daryl Goodrich and Caroline Rowland's films shone through. *Inspiration* shows children worldwide motivated by the London games as they appear on TV, emphasising the positive nature of competitive sport, and *Make Britain Proud - London 2012* is a star-studded affair, which features David Beckham, Jeremy Irons, Joseph Fiennes, Dame Helen Mirren, Sir Roger

Moore, Matthew Pinsent and Kelly Holmes. It has already won 13 gongs at the International Visual Communication Awards.

"Words can barely sum up how proud I feel at this moment. It has been an honour and a privilege to have contributed to the campaign's success and I look forward to seeing the games in London," says Caroline Rowland, Managing Director of New Moon. See www.new-moon.co.uk for more details.



HAVE YOU GOT NEWS FOR US?

Are you making the news? Then DCA wants to hear about it. Email us at dca@digitalcreativearts.co.uk or drop us a line on 01202 209336

COMMENT



● The iPod looks set to continue as the portable music player of choice

innovation in Tiger means Office for Mac users will be more productive now and in the future." With Microsoft products available for OS X and with the iPod catering for both platforms, the Apple and Microsoft relationship is improving.

The latest version of QuickTime has also helped by being released for Windows. "With nearly a billion copies downloaded, QuickTime has an impressive legacy of developing and supporting the latest digital media open standards and is already an incredibly popular Windows technology," says Philip Schiller, Apple's Senior Vice President of Worldwide Product Marketing. "By utilising the superb H.264 codec to deliver gorgeous video content, QuickTime 7 will change the way users experience video." For more information on Apple and its latest product lines, visit www.apple.com or head straight across to www.apple.com/uk.

Month in numbers

13 awards for New Moon's *Make Britain Proud*

14 nominations for Rushes' work at CADS Music Vision

19 hundred entrants for the Soho Shorts Festival

50 million songs downloaded from the UK iTunes site

62 percent of Ulead shares acquired by InterVideo



Ian Anderson

PUSHING CONTROVERSY AND COMMUNICATION TO NEW LIMITS, TDR TURNS THE COLUMN OVER TO YOU

Rant No 7: (Let The People Speak!)

I've always wondered what it would be like to listen to other people's opinions so this month I've given it a try...

I hadn't realised TDR were SO influential - cool, in the extreme. Designed with attitude. Made me want to play Wipeout. (abstract scrawl)

I am a prostitute. Frankly I find it offensive everyone is the same as me. Impressive & provoking, MAKES SHEFFIELD FEEL COOLER!

Geek! / Cheese! / it's Good very Much.

Bought, consumed, died, xxxx

Vacuous and pretentious!*

Let's hear it for consumer facism.

Good to see so many years of good work together

Fantastical, Inspiring, Wonderous.

very good arthey

Rockin'. 'W****r' says it all.

Great to see the exhibit in Sheffield. Finally!

*Pompous and closed-minded, Dr Holland

Incredible this comes out of Sheffield. Gives Hirst a run for his money.

Wonderful - more please but in a larger space.

As above.

Get doing some al fresco Banksy terror! (In SoYo™ not Londres / Bristol).

Waited far too long for this but worth the wait!!

Great videos & well produced stuff. V. interesting to look at & think about.

Fish, chips & Peas PLEASE!

(excellent 'school-knob' drawing)

Talented arrogance or self-effacing soul? Who cares - it's fantastic!

One of the best things EVER to come out of Sheffield. Keep it up brothers!

I don't understand! / But I do! / A bit cheese and onion

As far as I'm concerned, what art ought to be (about).

Happened to wander in and was completely shocked. Wonderful work.

Overpriced like Perrier, but we love it all anyway.

Is your Work the message or the messenger, that is the question?

It's all a bit 'new labour'!

A pure example of why I want to be a graphic designer.

Biting the hand that feeds? surely consumerism is doing you good?

Bank of Jesus desecrates the name.

I am a Christian but it (made me think) if this is you I need to meet you.

It is rude and good / rude and funny good and boring

Awesome. We can all die happy.

The switched-on-tuned-in already know TDR is bringing down the thunder in SoYo™ this summer with a design festival centred around a mini retrospective love letter to Sheffield at the city's Millennium Galleries. Above are the first 43 comments in the book.

Learn more: <http://www.pho-ku.com/exhibit/index.html>

Software



Vertus Fluid Mask

Vertus' Fluid Mask allows users to cut out objects from images. Its engine analyses the distribution of colours, finds the groups and the edges, the gradients and the textures. A model is then constructed from that data that divides the images into regions. Fluid Mask costs £299, go to www.vertustech.com for more.



Dxo Optics Pro v3.0

DxO Labs has announced that DxO Optics Pro v3.0 Digital SLR and lens automatic image quality enhancement software is available on the company's e-store (<http://store.dxo.com>). It incorporates revolutionary optics, noise and exposure corrections in an all-new, easy-to-use, feature-rich application for both Mac and PC users.



Alias DirectConnect for Pro/ENGINEER

Alias has announced its DirectConnect for Pro/ENGINEER release that allows users to visualise and share their high-quality and photo-realistic images for design evaluation, presentation and promotion. Check it out at www.alias.com/imagestudio, and you'll see just how many great features it offers.

DIGITAL VIDEO

Rodriguez heads back to the Café

SIN CITY DIRECTOR TO HOOK UP WITH FX TEAM AGAIN



Director Robert Rodriguez has made some unusual project choices in his time. While quite happy spilling blood and creating carnage in films such as *Dusk 'til Dawn*, *Desperado* and *Sin City*, he's also at home directing movies like *Spy Kids* for a family audience.

Once again donning his kids' cap, he returns with *The Adventures of Shark Boy and Lava Girl in 3D*. The movie mouthful is to be once again aided by the team of experts at CaféFX, with whom Rodriguez worked with in *Sin City*. The challenge in this project is the timing and environment of the shoot, as compares to *Sin City*'s non-existent world. "The thing about 3D is you have to do everything twice," said CaféFX Digital Effects Supervisor Everett Burrell. "What you see in your left eye differs slightly from the right, so our 150 shots were instantly doubled to 300. We knew what to expect coming off *Spy Kids 3D* and *Sin City* ('The Big Fat Kill'), but while those projects used actors on a greenscreen, with almost no environment, this project had none at all. And it was a challenge to eyeball the stereo aspects and ensure the background was sunk back far enough, and things meant to pop out did so at the correct distance." The movie, which features a world created entirely in a child's dream, is out in the US now with no confirmed release date as yet for the UK.

Director Robert Rodriguez has made some unusual project choices in his time. While quite happy spilling blood and creating carnage in films such as *Dusk 'til Dawn*,

News in brief



Ulead, InterVideo Follow

This April, InterVideo Inc. acquired 62.4% of Ulead shares. With majority shareholder status, InterVideo has now assumed a leading role on the Ulead board of directors. Ulead has now begun to integrate its product and technology development efforts with InterVideo. Watch this space!

BBC Game played 500,000 times

The Last Dalek game at BBC Online has reached a milestone by achieving 500,000 separate plays in three weeks, with over 250,000 of those in the first week alone. The New Media Collective launched the game to coincide with the airing of the *Doctor Who* - Dalek episode.



Rushes claims award

The Rushes VFX team claimed the prize for Best Special Effects at the CADS Music Vision awards, for their work on Dizze Rascal's 'Dream', while The Streets' 'Fit But You Know It' won best Urban Video. Rushes worked on 14 of the nominations, making it a very successful return for the team.

Animago Award for Mediaprojekt

MediaProjekt GmbH has won the prestigious Animago Award 2005, in the Professional Interactive category. The award was given for an interactive o2c-based application for Schüco, one of Mediaprojekt's clients, consisting of doors, windows, conservatories and much more.



DIGITAL DESIGN

Swansea students flower

GRADUATE EXHIBITION HAS THE NATURAL WORLD IN MIND

Swansea Institute held its final year degree showcase in the National Botanic Garden of Wales this year. Called 'Finishing Touches', the exhibition ran for a weekend and included work from the final year Multimedia, 3D Computer Animation and Music Technology students.

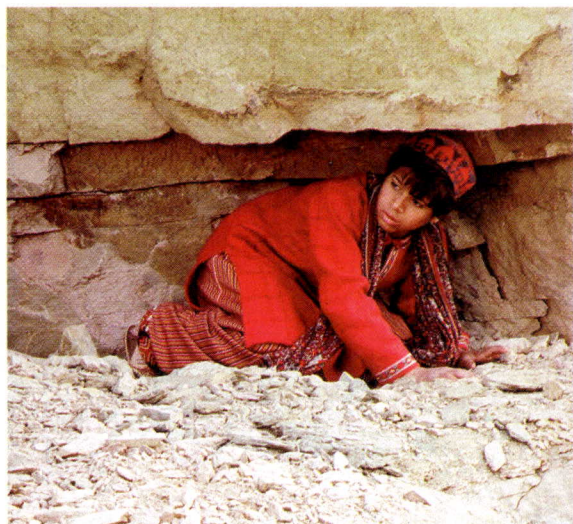
The exhibition was visited by leading figures in the creative industries and also the Economic Development Minister, Andrew Davies. Alias and Daler-Rowney, a manufacturer of fine art materials, sponsored the event. Work from this event will next be exhibited at the New Designers event in London, alongside work from more than 100 universities and colleges from the UK and Ireland. More information about Swansea Institute can be found online at www.sihe.ac.uk.



DIGITAL VIDEO

Catch the Shooting People drive-by

YOUR CHANCE TO SEE TOP TALENT FROM THE BACK OF A TRANSIT



● Some amazing independent films may be finding their way to you very soon, albeit via a transit van

Bringing a whole new meaning to the concept of a drive-in movie, Shooting People Mobile Cinema is hitting the roads again to bring short films to a town near you. With a van and a projector, three guys will take the shorts across the country, receiving requests as they go.

The public has been asked to call in and suggest locations for the screenings. "Films as fantastic as these deserve the opportunity to be seen by audiences anywhere and everywhere," comments Ben Blaine, Mobile Cinema Programmer and Shooting People Filmmaker. "We would urge anyone who has some space, some mates, and the desire to

see some of the most outstanding independent films on their own doorstep to give us a call. A space on the sofa after the screenings wouldn't go amiss as well!" The Mobile Cinema is expected to cover hundreds of miles this year to find those 'most deserving' of a night's entertainment.

The shorts include Ashvin Kumar's Oscar nominated *Little Terrorist*, among a host of other top talents. Mobile Cinema is supported by DVD rental firm LOVEFiLM, which is pioneering a new way of bringing films to the home, and Adobe, who has produced some of Shooting People's favourite pieces of creative software. See <http://shootingpeople.org> for more.

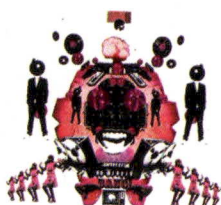
DIGITAL VIDEO

Soho Shorts shortlist announced

FESTIVAL ANNOUNCES FINAL NOMINATIONS

The 7th Annual Rushes Soho Shorts Festival has announced its shortlist for this year's prestigious awards. Formerly a London-based event, this year's festival will be nationwide, with screenings to be found all across the UK.

Exceptional short-listed films to look out for include *Sock* starring Jack Dee and Phil Jupitus, *Mercy* starring Natalie Press, *The Banker* starring Michael Sheen (funded by Trudie Styler), *Another Green World* starring Patsy Palmer, and *Blakes Junction 7* starring McKenzie Crook, Martin Freeman and Johnny Vegas. Short-listed music videos



include 'I Believe in You' from Kylie Minogue, 'Oh My Gosh' from the Basement Jaxx, 'Vertigo' from U2 and 'Blinded by the Lights' from The Streets. The event will take place during the month of August and has received a record-breaking 1,900 entries, which are spread between the various categories, including music videos, newcomer films and idents.

Partner Vue Cinemas will showcase short-listed films in Shepherds Bush, Edinburgh, Birmingham and Cambridge as well as in Leicester Square, the delegate centre for festival week. More information can be found at www.sohoshorts.com.

The good, the bad and the ugly from the creative world

SWATCH HOT

Secret FX

Was that real? Effects are becoming so good now that it's hard to tell... and we like it when we can't

Student showcases

It's great to find out how much fresh new talent is about to explode onto the creative scene!

Art for all

Everyone should have access to art, so bravo to Shooting People for showing us the way forward

British Film Industry

Even Oscar-winning directors couldn't beat the Brit might and movies for the 2012 Olympics!

SWATCH NOT

Cost v Power

Not everyone can afford a dual G5 machine, so we want more power for less money please

P2P pains

Years of toil and effort to create that perfect flick, and then someone puts your movie online. Stop it!

Phone pictures

Who wants an image that is 1 x 1 cm print size? Certainly not us, so it's not a good idea on any level

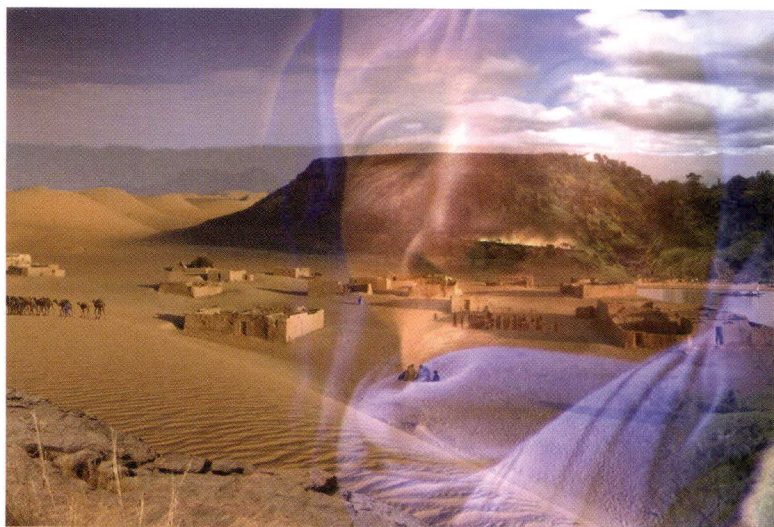
Creative copycats

We've seen some designs recently that seem to copy the style of someone else. Not big, nor clever

DIGITAL EFFECTS

Geldof gets helping hand from Lola

LONDON POST HOUSE GIVES AID TO SIR BOB



Post-production house Lola has produced a stunning opening credit sequence for the BBC series *Geldof in Africa*. In the wake of the Live8 concerts and the G8 summit, Geldof is continuing his work to eradicate debt and provide aid to the third world.

The program, written and presented by Sir Bob, covers a vast area of the African continent and offers great insight into a land gripped by poverty, war and disease. Lola was asked to create title graphics for the project, with Flame artist Rob Harvey creating the final product. Combining footage from more than 40 different locations in Africa, the flowing sequence of images aims to echo the journey that the

audience takes throughout the series. The composite is a continuous pan that takes in some breathtaking scenery and images of the people encountered on Sir Bob's impressive and moving journey.

Running over the course of six episodes, the program charts the mixture of hardship and optimism found in the people of Africa, and is an impressive document to raise awareness. For more information about the series, visit www.bbc.co.uk. For more information regarding Lola and its facility, see www.lola-post.com. Also, on the wider subject of poverty, see www.makepovertyhistory.org to find out how you can help this worthy cause.



● Post-production house Lola were involved in Sir Bob Geldof's latest project

A pick of the latest kit on the market

Hardware



LaCie SAFE Drive

LaCie has launched the LaCie SAFE Mobile Hard Drive with cutting-edge biometric technology, where fingerprint authentication grants access to the drive. Thanks to embedded software, no installation is needed on the host computer, making this storage solution completely mobile. Go to www.lacie.co.uk for more.



DT-V monitors

Announced at The Broadcast Production Show, JVC has added to the DT-V monitor range to provide HD monitors at SD price levels. JVC added a 10-inch model to the digital video (DT-V) range of HD and SD monitors, offering multi-signal video and audio options. They start at around £1,050.

Whose handiwork is it anyway?

DYING TO KNOW WHO THE CREATIVE GENIUS IS BEHIND A PARTICULAR EFFECT, ILLUSTRATION OR ADVERT? DROP US A LINE AND WE'LL FIND OUT FOR YOU...



Website: 5 Senses
Company: Magnum
Production Company: MRM Partners
MRM unlock the five senses in this online interactive campaign. Once you buy one of the ice creams, the bar code is your key to a sensory journey across this lush site that ties the whole campaign together nicely.



TV advert: Adidas 'Impossible Field'
Agency: 180 Amsterdam
Production Company: Kleinman Productions
Post-production: Framestore CFC
Directed by Daniel Kleinman, this ad was created in Amsterdam with many soccer stars involved - including the ever-present David Beckham.



TV advert: Tease Me
Company: Everyman
Production Company: Hotspur & Argyle
Post-production: Rushes
Male members of DCA seem transfixed by this ad, which sees Rachel Stevens cavorting on a bed. It was designed to promote awareness of testicular cancer.



Music Video: Free Aung San Suu Kyi
Artist: Damien Rice & Lisa Hannigan
Production Company: Splinter Films
Post-production: Rushes
DCA iPod regular Damien Rice and Lisa Hannigan support the campaign to release the imprisoned Nobel Prize winning Aung San Suu Kyi on her 60th birthday.

Create. Store. Backup. Go.

LACIE



LaCie USB or FireWire Hard Drives

- Portable & stackable - only 11.2 x 18.8 x 3.5cm
- Sleek, robust enclosure - design by F.A. Porsche
- Silent no-fan operation with metal base cooling
- 7200rpm ideal for DV Video or multitrack audio
- FireWire or USB2.0 versions - cables included
- Compatible with Windows® backup utility
- 2 years manufacturer's warranty as standard

Available Models:

FireWire - 80GB, 160GB, 200GB, 250GB
USB2.0 - 80GB, 160GB, 200GB, 250GB



LaCie Triple Interface, FireWire 800/400 & USB2.0 'd2' Hard Drives

- Sleek, aluminium heat dissipating robust case
- 7200rpm ideal for DV Video - silent operation
- Fast FireWire 800 'Extreme' up to 80MB/s sustained
- FW 400, USB2.0 & FW800 (all cables included)
- Compatible with Windows® backup utility
- 2 years manufacturer's warranty as standard

Available Models:

160GB, 200GB, 250GB, 320GB, 400GB,
500GB, 1000GB, 1600GB, 2000GB



LaCie Photon LCD Monitors

- DVI and VGA connectors
- Highest specification LCD monitors, IPS technology
- Photon 20 - resolution 1600x1200
- Photon 20 - response time 16ms
- Photon 20 - dot pitch 0.25
- Photon 20 - 176 degrees viewing angle (IPS)
- 3-year advance replacement warranty

Available Models:

Photon LCD/TFT 19"; Photon LCD/TFT 20.1"
NEW 300 Series - LCD/TFT 321 - 21.3"



LaCie USB/FireWire 2.5" Mobile Drives

- Ultra-portable - only 7.6 x 12.9 x 1.7cm & 200g
- USB 2.0 and/or FireWire interface - cables included
- AC adapter-free, powered by USB or FireWire
- Ideal for notebook/laptop users as mobile storage
- Sleek, robust enclosure - design by F.A. Porsche
- Compatible with Windows® backup utility
- 2 years manufacturer's warranty as standard

Available Models:

USB2.0 - 40GB, 60GB, 80GB, 100GB
FireWire & USB2.0 - 40GB, 60GB, 80GB, 100GB



NEW! LaCie d2 'LightScribe' FireWire or USB2.0 16x DVD+/-RW's & CD-RW

- LightScribe direct disk labeling technology
- For professional looking created media
- Double Layer DVD up to 8.5GB capacity
- Dual format DVD+/-RW (and CD-RW)
- Super fast write and re-write speeds
- Bundles Include DVD authoring software
- 2 years manufacturer's warranty as standard

Available Models:

d2 DVD+/-RW 16x4x12x Double layer & CD-RW
Slim 8x DVD+/-RW Double layer & CD-RW
Mobile 24x24x24x CD-RW 8x DVD Combo



NEW! LaCie Serial ATA External 'd2' Hard Drive

- Revolutionary SATA interface transfers up to 150MB/s
- Alternative to costly SCSI and Fibre channel systems
- Increased performance, reliability and scalability
- Drives ships with SATA PCI card as standard
- Drive powered via PCI card - no need to use PSU
- classic 'd2' design with no fan for silent operation
- 2 years manufacturer's warranty as standard

Available Models:

160GB, 250GB, 400GB



NEW! LaCie 'Biggest Disk' FireWire 800 & USB2.0 RAID

- Up to 2000GB, RAID 0, 0+1, 5, 5+ hot spare
- Exceptionally high transfer rates of 80MB/s FW 800
- Sturdy aluminium enclosure & ultra quiet operation
- Compact - only 15.3 x 29.8 x 17.6 cm
- Affordable RAID starting at 1000GB, SRP £899+VAT
- Hot swappable hard disk; superior RAID security
- Automatic online rebuilding with RAID 5
- 2 years manufacturer's warranty as standard

Available Models:

1000GB, 1600GB, 2000GB



NEW! LaCie Silverscreen Portable TV Movie Playback Drive

- Playback your photo's and movies **directly** on any TV
- Plug into any PC via USB2.0 to copy your multimedia
- Acts as a portable datashuttle/back-up USB2.0 HDD
- Ultra-small, quiet, USB powered, 2.5" mobile drive
- Ships with remote control, power unit and all cables
- Store 20,000 MP3's, 15 MPEG-2 or 80 DivX movies, 1,000,000 photo's in VGA, or up to 80GB of data

Available Models:

USB2.0 - 40GB, 80GB



NEW! LaCie d2 'Ethernet Disk mini' Network Hard Drive (NAS) and USB2.0

- Share data across a network by unlimited users
- Easily administered via any web-browser
- Quick and simple installation - no drivers needed
- No Server required, NAS hard drive
- Fast ethernet connection or USB2.0 direct attach
- For Windows®, Mac OS® and Linux
- 2 years manufacturer's warranty as standard

Available Models:

'd2' mini NAS & USB2.0- 250GB, 400GB, 500GB
Ethernet Disk XP embedded- 800GB, 1000GB

For latest pricing please visit www.lacie.com/uk
E-mail: info.uk@lacie.com

RESOURCES #1

Stock footage

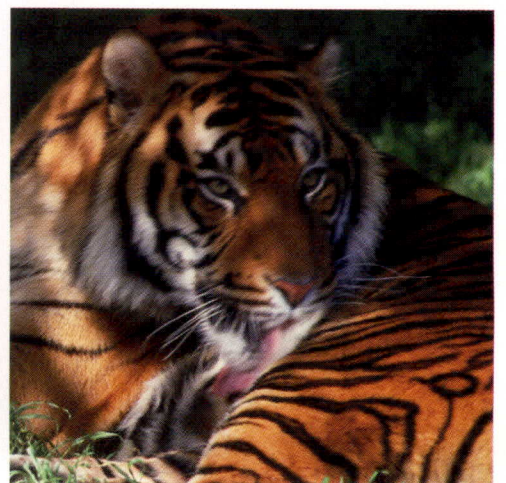
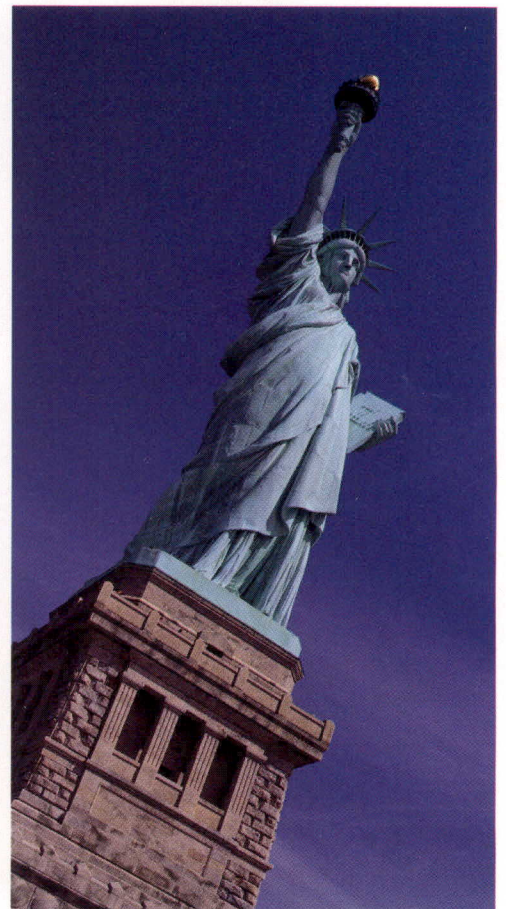
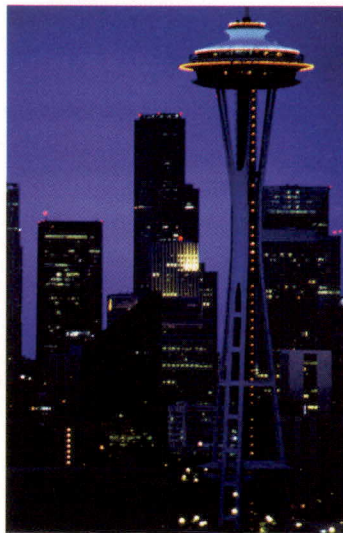


DVarchive footage
URL: www.dvarchive.com

When you want stock footage, you want it quickly, and without the hassle of trawling through CDs and DVDs before finding something that fits your requirements. DVarchive agrees that the process should be easy, and is setting the standard for high-quality stock footage too.

Not only is there a database that's searchable using keywords, but it can also be accessed at anytime, which means your project doesn't stop at the close of business. Also better than CD and DVD libraries is the fact that once purchased, your footage is instantly downloadable from DVarchive's high speed servers and in a number of different formats. With shooters across the globe filling the archives daily, there is bound to be something you are looking for.

DVarchive was founded by Rick Ray, the president and also principal shooter for the company. With an extensive history in the field, Rick is attempting to gather "simply the greatest collection of 16mm, 35mm and DV based clips" on the web and so far, it looks like he's succeeding. The clips gathered on the site are available in QuickTime DV format using the Apple codec and are uncompressed. Every clip can be integrated into Final Cut or Premiere Pro as soon as they are downloaded. The images here are just a drop in the ocean of the DVarchive range, so head on over to www.dvarchive.com and see the full selection in all its glory. We're sure you won't be disappointed.



Motion backgrounds

JBP Royalty Free

URL: www.jbproyaltyfree.co.uk

JBP Royalty Free is part of John Baynham Productions, a video production company based in Derbyshire. The company was created in 2002 to meet the needs of businesses and individuals seeking affordable, high-quality promotional video production. Previous clients have included GBL Limited (the makers of Vodka Kick) as well as Surrey County Council and Derbyshire County Council.

The company began when, during the course of several projects, it noticed a lack of quality UK-based royalty-free source material, instead finding the emphasis to be in favour of US-based video clips. To address this problem, the company decided to produce its own quality royalty-free footage for producers specifically seeking UK-based material; while ensuring it is also affordable.

All of the clips are available as complete themed collections and offer outstanding value for money. The collections are available

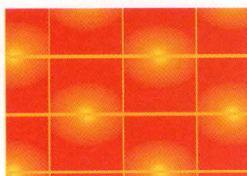
to purchase from the dedicated royalty-free website at www.jbproyaltyfree.co.uk. More interestingly, every video is produced in-house, thus making every clip totally unique and exclusive to JBP. Online previews, easy ordering and fast delivery of every clip ensure that choosing the ideal footage for any project is an enjoyable and stress-free experience.

To mark the launch of its royalty-free site, the company has produced a 3-DVD set entitled 100 Motion Backgrounds; a collection of high-quality backgrounds suitable for use in a wide variety of creative projects. As an introductory offer to DCA readers, JBP Royalty Free is offering the above collection at the discounted price of £49.99, a saving of £30 off the normal price. Take advantage of this offer by phoning 01246 540342 and then quoting the reference DCAMB100.

The motion backgrounds are ideal for titles, DVD menus or can easily be masked to create impressive lower thirds. New collections and clips will be added to the expanding library on a regular basis, while forthcoming collections will include stunning contemporary footage of Britain's countryside, transport and lifestyle. Furthermore, the company are always keen to listen to its client's requirements and meet their needs if possible.

Extra! Extra! Read all about it...

For more information on the exclusive offer on the Motion Backgrounds collection available to DCA readers, head to the advert on page 107 for full details. You'll be bagging some great content and a saving of £300 too!



Must-see sites



BD4D

www.bd4d.com

We heard about this site in a pub, so you're lucky it has made it to the page. As you'll see, Designers For Designers is a great resource for all things creative. If you visit Pixelsurgeon a lot, this will soon be on your daily browse list too. A great looking site with some excellent content.



The Digital Artist

www.thedigitalartist.com

This is a nice site that hosts more than a thousand visual artists from around the world. As well as this, it is also a home to a multitude of resources for the digital artist. Furthermore, it's free to exhibit as well, so to be fair you should really be getting yourself signed up right now.



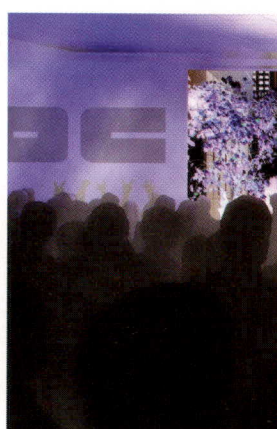
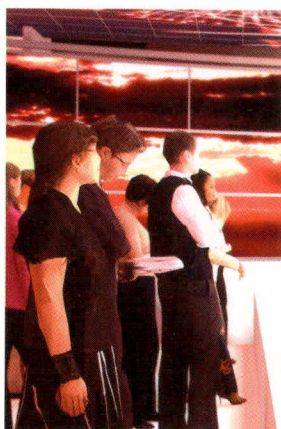
Days in A Day

www.1h05.com/diad

If you're interested in working in Flash or you wish to combine your digital art with a Flash site or presentation, this site is just the inspiration you need. Beautiful art, music and interface design all come together to make up this superb piece of concept art. Sit back and enjoy.

RESOURCES #2

 This superb collection of 3D models is guaranteed to get your creative juices flowing – grab them from the disk and see for yourself



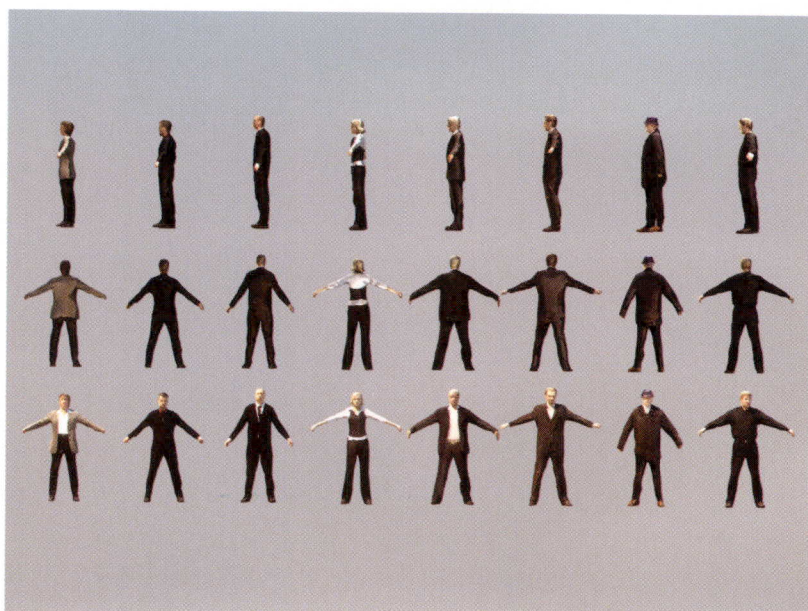
Lowpolygon 3D

URL: www.lowpolygon3d.com

If you need a 3D model you should be looking at Lowpolygon 3D, as it has a number of models on offer, including vehicles, interiors, exteriors and people.

With a variety of still and animated models available, the website features an online store where models can be purchased and downloaded. The store is searchable and categorised into genres with a number of free samples available for users to try first. It's also common to see special offer deals on the site so it's worth checking back regularly to snap up some bargains.

We've got a selection of human models from Lowpolygon 3D on the CD, which are free for readers to use as they wish. This selection from the sizeable library should whet your appetite for more purchases. The files are in 3ds max format and should run with most versions of the software and compatible programs. If you can't find a model you like, Lowpolygon 3D also offers a custom modelling service. For a small fee you can get Photogrammetric models made for you. Starting at \$20 an hour, photographs can be turned into textured 3D models or you can opt to outsource your entire project to the company. Pay a visit to www.lowpolygon3d.com to find out more.



3D models

Stock photos

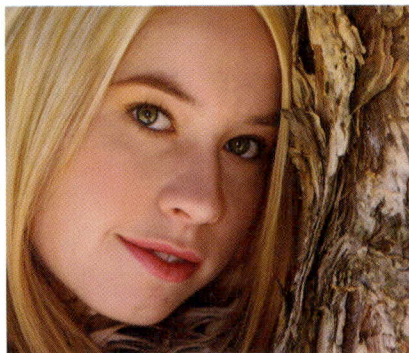
Inmage

URL: www.inmage.com

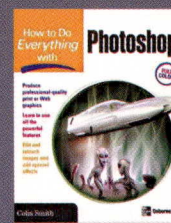
Founded in 2000, INMAGINE possesses one of the world's largest collection of royalty-free digital images, and a growing family of best-selling image collections.

With heavy emphasis on building a website that is easy to use and that features very detailed information for each image, INMAGINE enables the client to buy what they see. Currently, INMAGINE has more than 880,000 images to cater for your

every need, with the images shown here only making up a tiny part of its vast online library. Images can be searched in a number of ways, including the advanced search, via the website www.inmage.com. In line with its expansion plan and in response to the demand of its customers and contributors, INMAGINE has recently launched its primary subscription-based site, www.123royaltyfree.com. A company who strives to satisfy, INMAGINE relishes every customer's dream of a fast, effective and easily available service through its 24-hour support team - a definite must for your stock image needs.



New books

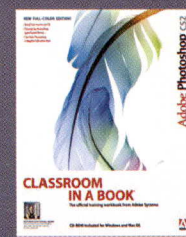


How to Do Everything with Photoshop CS2

Author: Colin Smith
Publisher: Osborne
ISBN: 0-07-226160-9

Price: £17.99

This full colour book shows how to create and enhance a variety of images and web pages using Photoshop CS2 and features a Behind the Scenes gallery, which lets readers in on the Photoshop secrets used by the pros.

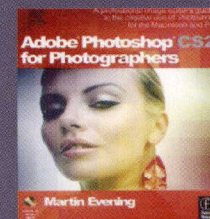


Adobe Photoshop CS2 Classroom in a Book

Author: Adobe Creative Team
Publisher: Adobe Press
ISBN: 0321321847

Price: £35.99

Updated especially for the release of CS2, this is an indispensable guide written by people who know the software inside out and have nurtured it like their own child. Plenty of tips and tricks to be picked up here.



Adobe Photoshop CS2 For Photographers

Author: Martin Evening
Publisher: Focal Press
ISBN: 0240519841

Price: £27.99

This latest work from Martin Evening updates the knowledge banks of photographers to prepare them for CS2. Covering both Mac and PC, this is a great buy for the photographer who wants to get to grips with the latest features.

BEHIND THE SCENES CHARLIE AND THE CHOCOLATE FACTORY



JUST THE GOLDEN TICKET

ALL IMAGES: © 2005 WARNER BROS. ENTERTAINMENT INC.

BURTON'S DESIRE TO SHOOT WITH REAL SQUIRRELS IS QUICKLY PASSING INTO FILM LORE, BUT THE NEW DAHL ADAPTATION DID BENEFIT FROM A WEALTH OF DIGITAL EFFECTS



The combination of Roald Dahl's story, Tim Burton's direction and Johnny Depp's performance has been much anticipated by film fans around the world. But while Burton's desire to use as many on-set, physical effects as possible has been much talked about, several UK post houses - including Cinesite, Framestore CFC and The Moving Picture Company - actually worked on a large number of scenes. "When [physical effects] reached their natural limitations, we took over in the digital realm," explains Visual Effects Supervisor Nick Davis.

One of the major debates before the movie went into production was how to create the famous Oompa-Loompas. While live-action was used for the 1971 movie starring Gene Wilder, developments in animation lead to speculation that the entire troop of factory helpers could be computer-created. In the end, an intermediate route was selected, which allowed the team to combine the strengths of both worlds. Essentially, all of the Oompa-Loompas were played by Deep Roy, who Burton calls: "The hardest-working man in show business."

CLOWNING ABOUT

"The first time Tim mentioned the idea he said 'There will be only one Oompa-Loompa and it's going to be you. We're going to create hundreds from you'. Then

he thought perhaps I would be doing as many as five in close-up. The next time I saw him in London, five had become 19! In the end, it didn't matter to me if it was 19 or 20 or 50. It's been an absolute blast," explains Deep Roy. To achieve this, Roy had to give a performance for each and every Oompa-Loompa, and this was taken into the digital realm using facial and figure motion caption. "The audience may think it's all computer-generated," says Roy. "But that's not the case. If you see 20 Oompas on screen, that means I did all 20 performances," he insists.

But, of course, the sets required for the cocoa master's factory were just as important as the characters. "Instead of relying too much on blue- or greenscreen effects, we tried to build as much of the settings as possible," Burton explains. "We built most of the sets at 360 degrees so the actors are really enveloped in the environment," he added. Luckily, all the work was worth it, with Dahl's widow Felicity commenting: "It's magical! I know that if Roald had seen it, he would have loved it. He would have said this is exactly what he had in mind."

Pretty much every scene in the movie has a foot in the CG camp, a foot in the world of models, and a foot on the Pinewood lot too. As Production Design Alex McDowell explains: "The spun-sugar boat travels from the chocolate river into a white tunnel rapids ride. It's a physical entity in the chocolate room but



● The weird and wonderful world of the factory was created digitally after actors were filmed against a bluescreen

inside the tunnel is a fully CG environment. The boat goes onto a gimbal platform and is shot against a bluescreen. It also has to be replicated and made in CGI. You have actors in the physical boat with prosthetic Oompas and CG actors with scaled-down Oompa-size CG versions of Deep Roy at the oars in the CG boat. I spent a couple months in close collaboration with the CG and miniatures companies, designing alongside the 3D and physical model makers," he explains. Another big task was the iconic chocolate river, of which Nick Davis comments that "viscosity, looks, colour testing and safety issues, not to mention logistics, quantity, transportation and storage" were the major challenges for the team.

A WORLD OF PURE IMAGINATION

But as well as creating the chocolate river so it looked good in the studio, the cinematographer Philippe Rousselot had to make sure it looked good on film, which was pretty difficult. "Tim wanted

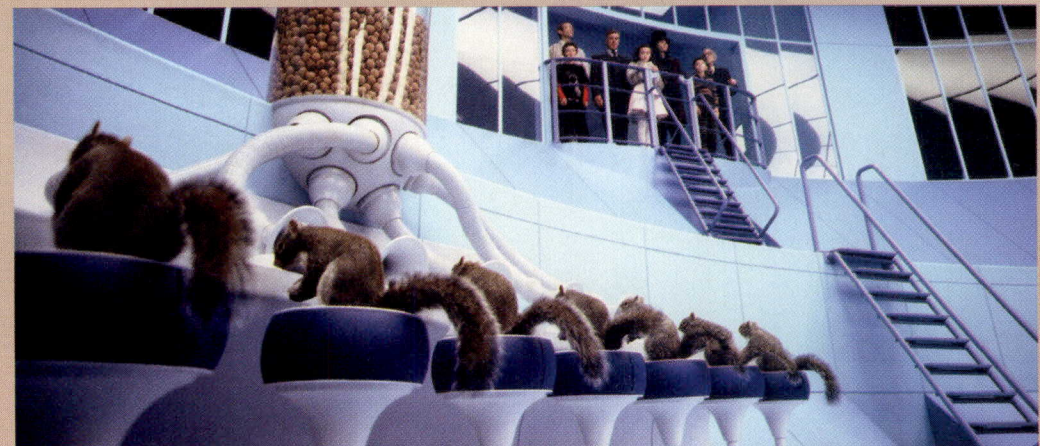


● In the latest adaptation of Roald Dahl's classic *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*, Johnny Depp steps into the big-haired shoes of Gene Wilder to play the eccentric and exciting, charismatic and colourful man, that is Willy Wonka

vibrant lighting and primary colours, but it turns out that bright and coloured lights don't mix well with chocolate. It was tough for us to keep the chocolate from turning grey or the boat from turning into a muddy mess. It was a real balancing act, to focus white light on some things while not detracting from the primary-coloured walls. We worked out the lighting scheme one sequence at a time; some of it could be done digitally and some had to be lamps on stage," explains Davis.

Another consideration while shooting was the fact that the film was to get a simultaneous IMAX release, and the 15/70 required film frame is 10 times larger than a conventional 35mm frame, and the resolution

and detail really have to be perfect. Technical issues aside, one of the main reasons the adaptation of the book is so successful is that its writer felt a particular connection to the source material. Screenwriter John August (whose credits include the hit films *Go* and *Big Fish*) explains: "When I was in the third grade, we had to write a letter to a famous person. Nearly everyone chose Jimmy Carter, who was the president at the time, but I chose Roald Dahl instead because my favourite book was *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*. What's incredible, is that I got back a postcard from him, from England." Get excited about finding a golden ticket yourself by heading over to <http://chocolatefactorymovie.warnerbros.com>. DCA



● The job of the production team was a tough one, with many aspects requiring creation through digitally creative means



Controlling the comedy

FROM *SPITTING IMAGE* TO *THE LEAGUE OF GENTLEMEN'S APOCALYPSE*, STEVE BENDELACK HAS SEEN MANY CHANGES IN BOTH TV AND FILM. BEN HARVELL CAUGHT UP WITH THE MAN BEHIND THE MADNESS



BH: So, how did you get started?

SB: I started working at *Spitting Image*, I suppose because at the time I could draw and I could make things and I was really cheap. So I didn't mind doing anything and everything, including sweeping the floor. I'm joking, but in the pre-digital days, if you could draw or sculpt that's how you started.

BH: Did you come into that with any formal training?

SB: Yes, I went to art school. At *Spitting Image* I did a variety of work from moulding to animatronics.

BH: Did that teach you any useful skills?

SB: I think it did, certainly the marriage of how to do things in camera quickly for a satire show like *Spitting Image* - where you had to react very fast to any given situation - was a huge training for many

of us. We wanted to make a multi-medium TV show which encompassed animation, when there was only one show doing that: Peewee Herman's *Playhouse*. I've had a long association with Framestore and in a way we've been able to avail ourselves of whatever cutting-edge technology came along and use it in the best way possible.

BH: And it's come on in leaps and bounds since then?

SB: Now you can take a laptop and a DV camera, (plus a lot of talent) and produce something very sophisticated. It's the same thing you can do with music, it's got to that stage now. You can almost treat it as a sketchbook and execute it to quite a high degree of finish. When I was trying to get into television, you couldn't get into a unit, they wouldn't let you. What's so good is that anybody with a good idea can do it; it's like having a guitar.

BH: Would you have done anything differently?



● Steve is currently working on a number of adverts for Pink Films, for clients like Tiscali

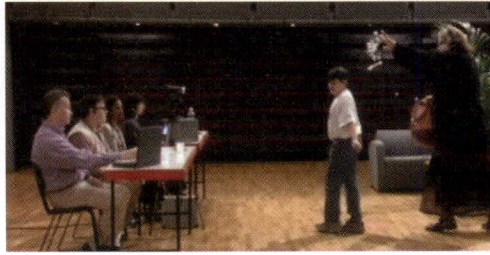
SB: I would do everything differently. Towards the end of *Spitting Image*, we were experimenting with live motion capture, this was ten years ago. We hoped to include a bit of it in the show, but it wasn't reliable. Now there are packages that anyone can use. Audiences are much more visually literate than they were fifteen years ago. When I'm lobbing fireballs with my son in the Return of The King game for the Playstation and we're in a world that's seemingly limitless, that's not something people would have understood fifteen years ago.

BH: Do you think it really is limitless?

SB: I think the danger is that if you see something like *Van Helsing*, there's a certain numbness to the effects. I believe you should do as much as you can in camera, because you have to offer some visceral contact with whatever is in the frame and if you subconsciously sense that there isn't, it somewhat passes you by, no matter how clever or brilliantly executed it is. The *League of Gentlemen* film is an entirely digital film, right down to the fact it's on tape, but with Framestore we almost hid a lot of the effects where there's three characters playing each other and so on, shot in a sort of documentary way. You should use the technology to sweeten and enhance. I suppose what we wanted to do was to use all the fantastic tools available to us. High-definition does give you a stable format for doing things like a genuine, in camera, three dimensional stop frame figure. Framestore is at the leading edge of digital, and the projection process adds so much to how you see an effect; as soon as it is on a piece of film it has a far better quality than its pure state.

BH: Were you worried about making the leap to film?

SB: I think we were worried about it, but on the other hand - in terms of the performances - I think they're naturally cinematic. I was worried about that certain amount of prejudice you get when you're a TV show and you're converting it into film.



● With a career that spans back to *Spitting Image*, Steve is well tutored in the ways of television and film comedy

You're going to get it, no matter what. If you then make a film that is partly about yourself then you're just going to get even more crap. I think we were aware that was all going to happen, and possibly could, and did. So yes, we were worried, but in another sense we've been immersed in cinema all our lives. Film is a passion and always has been, but it's just that we're working in TV. We did approach the series in that way, we were making little movies.

BH: Does the best comedy happens 'in the moment'?

SB: Yes, I think that happens all the time. Once we

"I RECENTLY WENT TO SEE REVENGE OF THE SITH AND MY ARSE WAS KILLING ME"

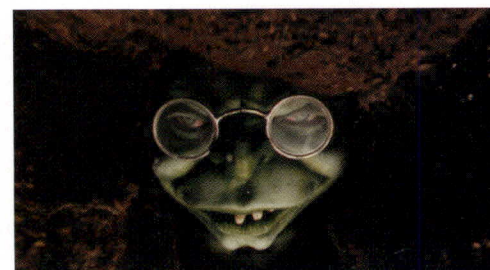
go to a rehearsal room and block it, we tend to apply that blocking to whatever location we end up using. There's a joke at the start of the film where Jeremy Dyson is being chased by two characters towards a cliff and they start playing Grandmother's Footsteps with him, then they disappear and pop up from below him. That was all done in the moment; we never intended to do that.

BH: Would you say TV is easier to direct than film?

SB: I would say on film, you have a little bit more room to play around. But visual comedy needs an awful lot of time devoted to it. You have to look for a special moment and you've got to have the bases covered so if something magical happens then you can chuck everything out of the window.

BH: Do you think comedy is harder to direct?

SB: Well it is a serious business... There are an awful lot of things to be aware of and you have to keep all those balls in the air at the same time. It's hard to say if something more serious is more complicated and harder to do. If you're funny, you're funny and if



● As director of TV shows like *Little Britain* and *The League of Gentlemen*, Steve believes comedy is just as hard as drama

you're not then nothing in the world will make you funny. *Groundhog Day* is brilliant, and had it had Jean Luc Godard's name it, it would be seen as a work of genius.

BH: Do you find it hard to lose good gags in the edit?

SB: In television yes, but we were determined that it wasn't going to go beyond 90 minutes. For TV we're working to twenty nine minutes. We ring them up and say 'can we have another 30 seconds?' and they say 'use it next week'. The movie came in at about two hours ten minutes, so we chopped out forty minutes. It was difficult, but I would say 95% of the cuts were good. I can't bear to sit there for hours. I recently went to see *Revenge of the Sith* and my arse was killing me.

BH: What do you think of the *Apocalypse* effects?

SB: Royston Vasey under fireball attack looked good, we could only afford one shot which we repeated - three times. It was fun; it was basically fireballs made of rags and petrol on wires hurtling towards a black space that we shot at night. We thought "bloody hell, you only see the apocalypse for six seconds, why call it 'apocalypse' you sods!?", but I can't be upset about that.

Steve is currently working on ads for Pink Films (www.pinkfilm.com) and directing TV. *The League of Gentlemen's Apocalypse* will soon be on DVD. **DCA**

QUICK DRAW

Q: How would you describe yourself in five words?

A: I find that rather difficult

Q: Who is your idol?

A: How long have you got?

Q: What's your favourite film?

A: You can't beat Kodachrome 25

Q: What's the biggest cliché in the creative world?

A: 'It's so totally original'

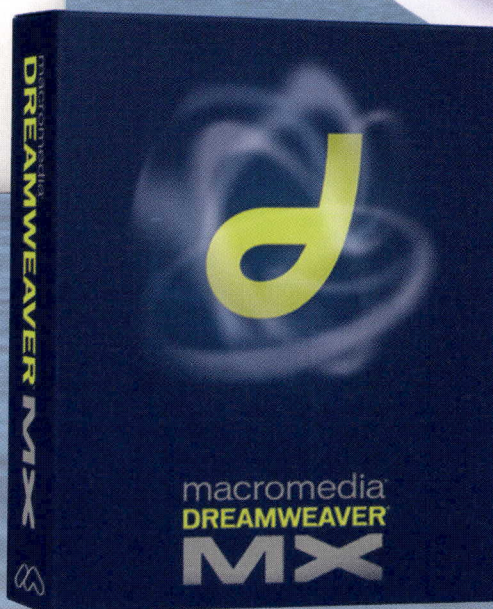
Q: What would be your Plan B career?

A: Film critic. If they can do it...

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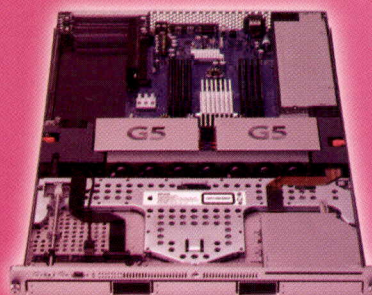
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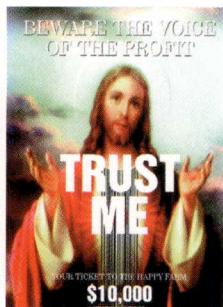
FEEDBACK

What's on your mind? If you want to tell the world about your work, comment on someone else's or just let us know what you like or don't like about *Digital Creative Arts*, this is the place to do it. Go on - get in touch

★ STAR LETTER

SUBJECT: ALEXIS STOCKER
FROM: DON'T JUDGE A BOOK

Ian Anderson's rants immediately caught my eye when they were added to the news back in issue 15. I'm a graphic designer, and of course I'm well aware of The Designers Republic and really like its work. I thought the first piece was a little on the pretentious side to be honest, but subsequent instalments have me hooked. From the sublime to the ridiculous, Ian seems to have an opinion on everything. He's also got a really distinctive style of writing, and even though I don't understand absolutely all the references he fires into his copy (honestly now, does



● Ian Anderson's opinions are often the source of heated debate in the *Digital Creative Arts* office - but what do you think about what he says?

anyone?), the meaning - or should that be the emotion - is always pretty clear. And whether I agree with him or not, it's always fascinating stuff.

I really think Ian should think about writing a novel. It could have a cynical but sexy male lead, who could perhaps be a graphic designer at a well-known design agency. That character could then travel the world having fabulous artistic adventures and somehow managing to be both cynical and art-embracing at the same time. Just think, Ian could even design the cover for the book too.

PS. I do have a favourite jam. It's blackcurrant. I don't have a second favourite though.

Pretentious, nous? Seriously though, we're glad Ian's column has grown on you Alexis. The Designers Republic is obviously a big name in the world of the digital arts, so we thought you'd find what Ian had to say interesting. And with thoughts on everything from Superstar Designers, reality TV, clients, Lifestyle and (as you mentioned) the crucial topic that is jam, he's always worth a read. Oh, and no, we don't understand absolutely all of Ian's name-checks either, but we're sure some people do. What do other readers think?

STAR LETTER

receives a year's subscription to *Digital Creative Arts*. Write in now for your chance to win!

SHORTS...

SUBJECT: GETTING IN LINE
FROM: BRIAN BUCKLEY

Thanks for a great magazine. The reason I'm getting in touch is that I am looking forward to getting Photoshop CS2, and I have a question which I hope you may be able to help me with. When using custom shapes, is there a way of making the shapes (say a paw print) follow a path the same as you can when using type to follow a path?

Well Brian, we haven't found a way to do exactly what you're talking about, but we have a few suggestions you can try. Firstly, you can of course create your own Brush, and then create a path as normal for it to follow. The only problem is that although your custom shape will follow the path, it probably won't be in the way you want. You can get a closer approximation in Illustrator though. Here you can create your own Scatter Brush, and when you apply it you'll be able to tweak the settings exactly. Have any other readers got any suggestions?

SUBJECT: WHAT NEXT?
FROM: SAM HAWKES

I've been reading your Day in the Life slot with interest, as I'm not entirely sure what I'm going to do after I graduate this summer. At the moment I'm studying animation, but I'm also very interested in effects work. Great mag by the way!

This issue we're peeking into the world of Charlotte Bavasso from Nexus, so that might interest you, and keep an eye on future issues, as effects professionals will certainly feature soon!

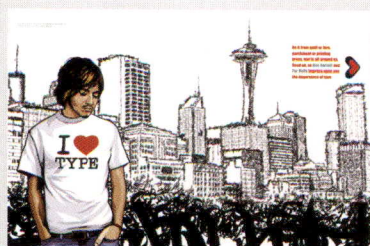
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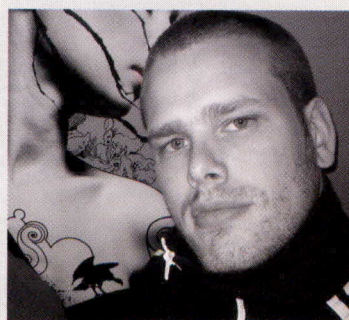
SUBJECT: BACK TO BASICS
FROM: DOMINIC ROARK

I really enjoyed your article about typography a few issues back. Software makes adding text to a project so easy that all too often I simply slam it on without really thinking about it. Reading your magazine I felt inspired to dig out my old typography books from when I was at college, and I was astonished at how much I'd forgotten. So I browsed



through them, and now I'm taking a totally different approach when I need to add words to what I'm working on. I feel inspired and refreshed - so thanks very much! I wonder, could you do a similar thing with graphic design as a whole? I'm sure my clients would thank you! Oh, and don't you think that Vault49's Jonathan Kenyon looks a bit like BBLB's Dermot O'Leary?

Flicking back through issue 19, we have to agree that there is a certain similarity between the Channel 4 presenter and the Vault49 designer. And come to think of it, it was Vault49 who designed those fantastic 'Long Dark Summer' ads for Channel 4 last year... Anyway, we're very glad you enjoyed our typography



● It would indeed appear that Vault49's Jonathan Kenyon looks a lot like Dermot O'Leary

extravaganza. Getting people thinking about text before they slap it on was exactly what we wanted, and don't worry, more general graphic design stuff should soon be heading your way!

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MAKE YOUR MOVIE

(AND YOUR NAME)

Filmmaking with small budgets has always been possible, but shooting digitally lets you edit and distribute too. From low-budget to no-budget, Poz Hulls and Ben Harvell separate the film fact from the film fiction

TONY MINES (www.spiteyourface.com)



Becoming a film director is not like becoming a policeman or a soldier or a teacher. While those professions have well-trod career paths and clearly signposted rungs for you to climb, wanting to get into the movies can sometimes feel like navigating your way across the Sahara without the help of a map. But there is one advantage, and that's that while picking up a scalpel doesn't make you a surgeon, picking up a camera does make you a director. You just have to believe that.

Of course there are plenty of runner jobs out there that the wannabe Spielbergs, Tarantinos and Scorseses of this world can take. You can graduate from that to third assistant to the director's PA, and one day in the distant future you might get to direct *Scary Movie 42*. But if you want to really make your mark, then forget about working your way up and just start working. Becoming a film director (or a producer, or a director of

photography, or an animator) is not a simple business, but it does come down to one simple fact; to get work you need to have work to show. Call it a short, a showreel or even a calling card, but you need to have made at least one film that serves as proof of your talent and potential.

Of course, you might get lucky and your film will actually be shown in cinemas, but the aim is really to get you noticed. The first step is to work out what role you want, and then team up with others - be they from university, your local pub or the internet. So, if you're a producer you need to find a writer and a director, and so on. From there, no matter what budget you're working with or country you're working in, the stages of filmmaking are basically the same; pre-production, production, post-production and distribution. The following pages will take you through this process, and prove that you don't need a crew of hundreds, a cast of thousands or a budget of millions to make a great movie. All you need is the talent, hard work and dedication of one; and that's you.



PRE-PRODUCTION



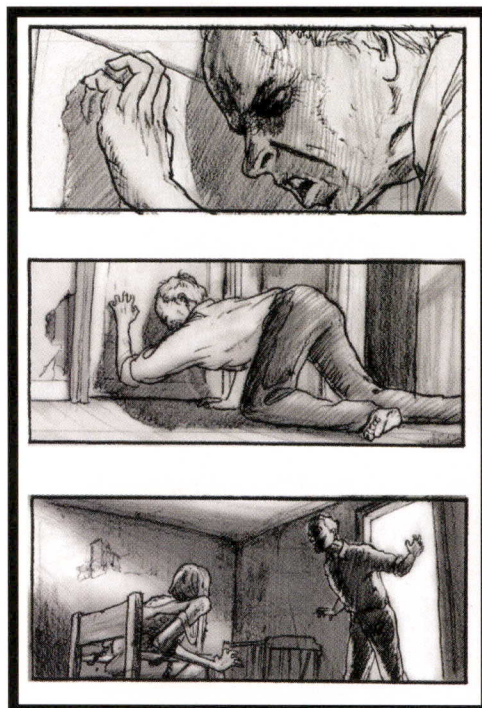
When asked what the three most important things were when making a film, Alfred Hitchcock is said to have responded: "The script, the script, the script." After all, all films revolve around their loosely bound sheets of A4, and there's an old showbiz adage that goes further, saying: "If it ain't on the page, then it ain't on the stage." It's repeated so often that it seems almost redundant, but some new filmmakers still forget how much hard work has to be done before the cameras roll. "It's a cliché with good reason," says Dave Waters, Creative Director at DFGW. "The script is everything. If it's funny, clever and original, you'll attract a good cast. You'll get a decent crew wanting to help you with a great script and ultimately it's what motivates the whole process," continues the director of *Sock*, which is on the shortlist at this year's Rushes Soho Short film festival. Moreover, the script needs to be something you really want to dedicate a year (or more) of your life to. As director Hannah Gal puts it: "Have a really good story that genuinely moves you and that you want to tell. Passion will take you a long way."

Once you have a script, the most crucial part of pre-production is to sit down and offset your script against your budget. If you're shooting with a skeleton crew and minimal funding, it might be best to find an alternative to the scene where the hero battles two-headed monsters on top of a burning castle in the outer rings of Jupiter, for instance.

ECONOMIES OF SCALE

Budget shouldn't restrict your creativity though, and this period should be a time for you to go through the script and assess just how you can make things happen, without necessarily blowing all your money on fireworks. Think about what can be added at a later date, because these days, post-production is something that can be done almost as easily from a bedroom as it can from a full-blown studio. Reliance on the old 'we'll sort it out in post' mentality is to be avoided though, because not only will you leave yourself more to do later, but any unexpected limitations of your post facility or software will give you re-thinks and re-shoots you don't need. Essentially, the script becomes a guide for the producer as the film is planned. Scene by scene, sets and props need

Sock is a prime example of how a good script can lure a superb cast, with the likes of Jack Dee and Phil Jupitus on board and providing voices for this short



to be found, and a million different questions (can we shoot in this church? When will this street be empty?) need to be answered. All these elements need to be sorted before the shoot starts or delays - and even brushes with the law - could soon become a part of your schedule. "I'm sure every producer would agree it's crucial to get every detail sorted out before the shooting starts, to avoid any hold-ups or problems on the day," says Kate O'Mulloy, who is *Sock*'s producer. "Sloppy pre-production can cause untold problems on the shoot. Shooting is hard work, but it should be fun - ours was," she adds.

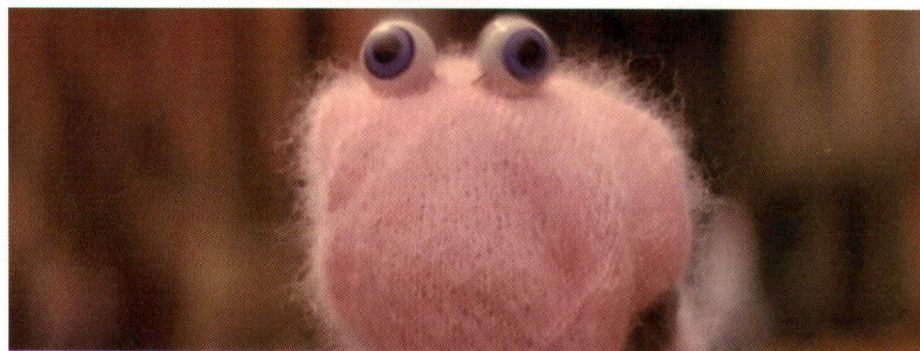
Creating a storyboard can be one of the best ways to make sure your shoot runs smoothly. Working from the script and creating a cartoon-style depiction of the film will give you an excellent reference for cast and crew to work from and allow them to picture the scenes before shooting begins. Storyboarding also helps unearth and avoid those pitfalls that would only come to light on the day of shooting. You don't need to be an artistic genius to knock up a storyboard, as even stick men will allow you to plan for the angles and framing you want to capture. Of course, if you happen to be a gifted



Hannah Gal's recent short film *Peekaboo* (www.peek-a-boo.tv) took her to Cannes, where she met a range of people who will be able to help her further her career. In fact, Hannah is planning to attempt a full feature film next time around...

artist (or know someone who is) then more detailed boards can be real blessing. Particularly if you're shooting action of any sort, it's the best way to think logically through the process, as well as the best shorthand for showing your cast and crew what the mood of each scene is supposed to be.

Finding great locations is also key, and many new writer-directors actually write their scripts around the locations they have available to them. For the ambitious among you, just remember that the more diverse the locations, the more attention that will need to be paid to how long and when you can shoot. For instance, when John Favreau decided to put his script for *Swingers* into production on a minimal budget, director Doug Liman and the assorted crew had to literally shoot guerrilla-style in the casinos of Las Vegas until they were thrown out, in order to guarantee they could fulfil the requirements of the script. A project with a big enough budget to allow for a location manager will take some of the pressure from the producer when it comes to arranging locations for shooting, as was the situation on *Sock*. Specialising in this area, they have the contacts and the know-how to get the



"Too many budding filmmakers settle for no-budget affairs without realising the wealth of budgetary options that are, in fact, available to them"

buildings and streets booked to fit the specific scenes. "Location manager Graham Aza made some initial calls on our behalf and we then took over the organisation and contractual side of booking the locations," explains Kate O'Mulloy. "Graham was always on hand to answer any questions, which made the whole process much less stressful than it might have been. Different locations had different contractual and insurance requirements, so it was obviously vital that these were satisfied."

CINEMATIC SAFETY

Once locations have been sorted, insurance is another vital element of pre-production. Determining the dangers involved in the whole shoot, as well as specific scenes, will be paramount to ensure that nothing comes back to bite you once shooting has begun. Equipment insurance is also vital, especially when filming outside a safe studio.

With the script, storyboard and legal issues in place, it's time to start looking at who's going to get involved in an acting capacity. Again, budget plays a crucial part in this, but if you're lucky enough and your script can lure them, you may find some quality actors are willing to work for little. For *Sock*, the team were fortunate enough to bag two of the UK's best comedians: "In this case we needed to cast two great comedy performers who could really spark off each other," says Kate. "We aimed high and were delighted when Jack Dee and Phil Jupitus agreed to take part in the project. Because we needed their recording for playback on the shoot, we were unable to start planning the shooting days until we'd confirmed the recording date. Needless to say, they are very busy men. Once we'd done the recording we were then able to approach key crew members

ONLINE ADVICE

PRE PRODUCTION
www.bectu.org.uk
www.filmaking.com
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Filmmakers on pre-production



DIRECTOR: Dave Waters
PRODUCER: Kate O'Mulloy
FILM: *Sock*
URL: www.dfgw.com

DCA: Tell us about your involvement in the pre-production process.

O'Mulloy: On a very low-budget short like *Sock*, I was involved in every element of the pre-production. I worked very closely with Dave, to make sure that I understood what he wanted to achieve. We both leant heavily on the talent and patience of our cameraman, Robbie Ryan, who was able to explain to both of us how to shoot Simon Riley's script.

Waters: As the director, my involvement throughout pre-production was mostly being in a listening mode. In this instance I had a huge amount to learn from everyone. Robbie Ryan was generous with knowledge and equipment and I have to say it's really because of his involvement that Kate managed to get the thing made.

DCA: What makes the difference between good and bad pre-production?

Waters: The difference between good and bad, for me, is simply; is the script good enough? Plus, have we made the money go as far as humanly possible? For instance, we shot a few scenes on video to make sure we didn't waste a lot of time and film shooting angles on the day that we knew we'd never use. And to make sure that the shots I'd storyboarded would sustain the length of the pre-recorded dialogue. We adjusted my storyboard about a dozen times during pre-production and on the shooting days everyone knew exactly what we were supposed to be doing for every shot. I also think that the numerous technical recce paid off handsomely. Robbie and I had all our discussions in a small unit so that people on the set didn't hear him bullying me on the day. We settled on a shooting schedule, angles, number of shots and contingencies before anything became expensive.

DCA: What did you shoot on?

O'Mulloy: 16mm. Our cameraman, Robbie Ryan, suggested we use anamorphic lenses and we were delighted with the result. John Mayes from Marshall Street cut *Sock* using Avid and we completed the film at Framestore on Infinity with compositor Paul O'Brien.

DCA: What advice would you give to someone who wants to be a filmmaker?

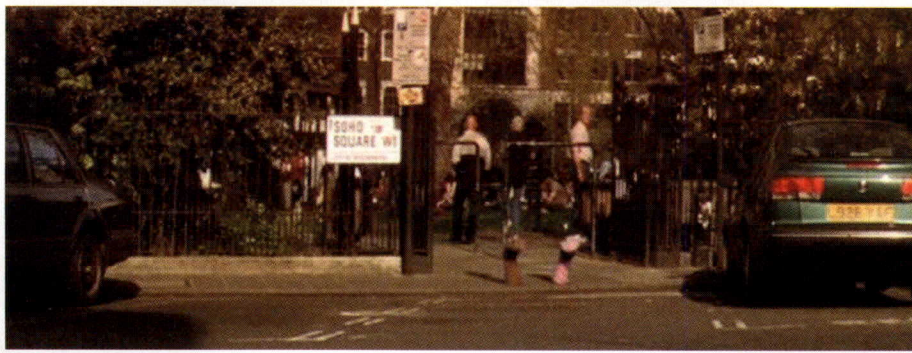
O'Mulloy: Find a good script. It doesn't matter how great a director or a producer you are, if the script's no good you'll never make a decent film. Dave and I wouldn't have embarked on *Sock* if we hadn't loved Simon Riley's script.

Waters: If you don't have any money then make some straight 8 films (see www.straight8.com for more). It's fantastic fun and really builds your confidence. Or do some video films and edit them on a lap-top. Just embark on anything that gets your hands all 'filmy', as it were.

THE PREP LIST

8 things to think about as you plan your movie

- Script ☒
- Storyboard ☒
- Budget ☒
- Casting ☒
- Locations ☒
- Schedule ☒
- Contracts ☒
- Insurance ☒



PRODUCTION



and the shoot was scheduled according to their availability," she adds. And it's worth remembering flexibility is an asset, as it'll be impossible for others.

Actors of that level will need to be paid, as will the crew, so if you happen to have a lots of friends also trying to make their way in the business then that's the obvious alternative. Obviously, this is a budgetary matter, but having a crew with no experience whatsoever can be a hindrance, no matter how helpful they are. "Trust forums like Talent Circle and Shooting People for free services and advice, but beware as lack of experience can be costly," warns Hannah Gal. "You might be better off paying a top crew with the ability to tackle whatever equipment failure and weather may bring. They also have great ability to feedback on creative matters and end up enriching your film." Either way, you will need to have proper contracts with everyone, just to protect all concerned. Of course, even if you aren't paying, it's vital that you put enough money aside for catering. A hungry crew is an unhappy one, and keeping them sweet is vital for finishing your film.

Filmmaking is an expensive business, and unless you've got a rich daddy who's prepared to pour his millions into your artistic endeavour, then funding is definitely something to explore. Temporarily donating your body to science may sound romantic, but the Robert Rodriguez method is not for

everybody, and credit cards can only be pushed so far. Too many budding filmmakers settle for no-budget affairs without realising the wealth of budgetary options that are, in fact, available to them. For instance, it is perfectly possible to get private investors, especially if you try and get small amounts from a large number of people. It may seem like a lot of hard work, but if you do it professionally then you might be surprised how many people are prepared to risk a slice of cold, hard cash for a brush with showbiz. You can even get them to work as extras and promise them tickets to your first premiere as further incentives. And

"Different locations had different contractual and insurance requirements, so it was vital these were satisfied before we were able to shoot"

there are also more public funding opportunities than you might think. The place to investigate this is the UK Film Council (www.ukfilmcouncil.org.uk), which distributes money for both shorts and features, as well as for the various stages of a film's life. Getting funding shouldn't be seen as a hassle, or as something that distracts you from creating your masterpiece. Quite the opposite in fact; applying for grants and seeking sponsorship will teach you that movie-making has its business side, and that to succeed you need to be able to balance a budget as well as direct a scene. Embrace the entire filmmaking process, and you'll enjoy your chosen career far more than those who rail against its practical and financial aspects.

Logic tells you that if you've prepared properly, then shooting should be breeze. But in reality, this is rarely the case. The weather will turn on you, your lead actor will pull out, your producer will turn into a money-grabbing devil and the location you'd locked down will suddenly become unavailable - and that's all if you're lucky. Essentially, shooting a movie is about rolling with the punches. You have to know what you can compromise on and what you can't, and you'll have to work long and hard to make sure you've got all the shots you'll need for the editing and effects section of moviemaking.

To over-simplify dramatically, there are two extreme schools of thought when it comes to actually shooting your movie. The first views the acting and the action as the most important thing,

and seeks to capture this in the best way possible. This generally means a lot of rehearsal and a multitude of takes, which results in a lot of coverage being shot. The advantage of this is that if there's anything that doesn't seem to work in the edit, there's always another angle you can use, or an insert shot you can cheat with. For instance, Robert Rodriguez is famous for saying that every time you see a cutaway to a dog in *El Mariachi*, it's simply to cover up the fact that the audio didn't sync properly. He may be exaggerating for effect, but there's no doubt that insert shots of key props, or extreme close ups of actor's faces, can be used to hide continuity problems. If the rest of your movie is good enough, these touches will probably be heralded as your own unique style.

CHOICE VERSUS COST

Despite that example, Rodriguez is actually a director that fits more comfortably in the latter category; one who knows exactly the shots they want, and doesn't waste time on endless takes or angles other than the ones they need. The extreme of this might be a director who regards his actors as mere talking dummies, and simply wants them to hit their marks and remember their lines. If you're shooting a low-budget film on film then this attitude can be of real value, as film stock costs a lot to buy and a lot to process. Of course, shooting on DV makes this less of an issue, and so your format decision should be based on the look you want, the budget you have, and your directorial style too.

As a director, 'your style' is something you really need to think about before you get on set. Don't passively accept that because you're working with a £5,000 budget not a £5,000,000 budget (and remember that's low by Hollywood standards too) that your film can't look good. It can and it will, if

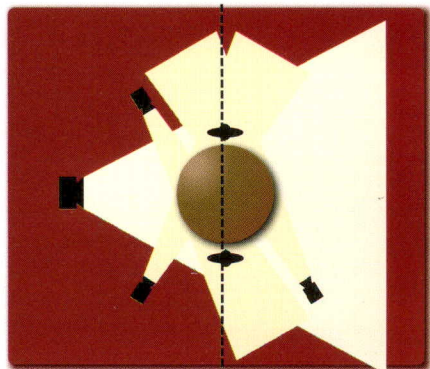
FIVE MINUTE FILM SCHOOL

Forget about splashing the cash or spending years at uni, here's a few things to consider

Never forget how much variety the basic shot choices (long shot, medium shot and so on) give you. Each of these has a different effect (extreme close-up is claustrophobic), as well as emphasising different details. Then there's the decision about whether to look up, down or straight at the actors.

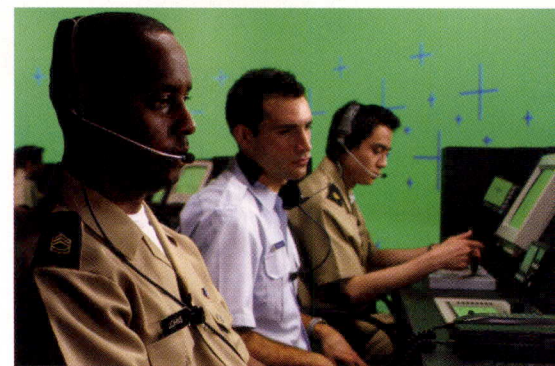
Even a simple conversation can be shot and cut stylishly, or not, and conventionally, or not. To stay with tradition you'll imagine a 180° line running between your two characters and then keep your camera on one side. Editing should be paced according to the speed and content of your scene, so think about this before you shoot. Always remember that the basic principle of editing is that an audience assumes a relationship between shots.

Finally, never forget about lighting. Done properly it'll give enormously depth to your image, and done badly, it'll make your whole movie look cheap. But while your audience will probably forgive cheap visuals; they'll never forgive poor sound.



ONLINE ADVICE

PRODUCTION
www.cinemaminima.com
www.dv.com
www.exposure.co.uk
www.filmmaking.net



you have the passion, the talent and the time to pour into your project. It might have a different look to the average action epic, but that doesn't mean it'll be worse, and planning your style is something that starts with the script.

Owen Thomas, the producer at Elemental Films, is a big believer that cinema is about spectacle, and that Indie filmmakers have to learn to achieve this in a different way that the big studios can with fireworks. As he explains: "A cheap car crash will never match up to an expensive car crash."

Continuing that a good script in the low-budget world is "one that is realisable", it's clear that the origins of your style begin in the script, but it is your treatment of the events that will really mark you out. Play to your strengths, and shoot tight close-ups if you've got great actors but weak sets, or stay in longshot if your costumes look flawed from any closer but contrast nicely with the environment. Work your angles and your framing, and try to make them original and dynamic and exciting. If they are, and the script is tight, then no-one will notice that your blaster gun is a toy and your spaceship is a model. Besides, you'll be able to polish those elements in post-production.

On top of your artistic style, there's also your management technique to think about. While film is undoubtedly a collaborative effort, it has to be led by one person, and that's the director. It can be pretty tricky to be the boss, especially when your crew are people doing you a favour, or if they're experienced and this is your first film. But you have to be firm. Listen to their ideas and advice for sure, but make your own decisions. Of course, a lot depends on whether you're paying people or not, and if so, if you're paying them well. People will generally be quite happy to take orders from the director and work long hours, as long as the



Filmmakers on production

PRODUCER: Owen Thomas

FILM: One Life Stand, Solid Air

URL: www.elementalfilms.co.uk

DCA: How did you come to digital filmmaking?

Thomas: For a long time, May Miles Thomas and I wanted to make a conventional feature film. Then, while making a documentary in 1998, we stumbled – quite by accident – on the first sort of equipment that let you edit at home. We soon found out that with only a little bit of money we could skip the conventional route, and the outcome was the feature One Life Stand in 2000. But One Life Stand was too outside the system, and it never sold. So with our next film we pursued a more conventional approach (going to financiers and arguing about what they'd accept) and the result was Solid Air. While we know it's fantastic, our UK distributor thinks otherwise. So, like One Life Stand, it hasn't got a release either. The moral is, however; if you don't talk to people beforehand then no-one knows what they are getting from the project, so just do your own thing anyway.

DCA: What's the impact of digital on the shooting process?

Thomas: It saves you money, and it speeds you up. But the attitude to how you work comes before the questions of the technology. There are so many people shooting now who get so hung up on the technology and forget about the craft, the heart. I see a lot of geeks going out with gear, and they have no idea what they want to make. I don't think anyone should be too hung up on this term 'digital'. What really matters is working out how and why you do the things you do. The equipment is the least interesting thing. They have always been cameras that could shoot cheaply after all. Digital can help you realize a stronger aesthetic, but nothing will substitute for a little forethought, a little care and a little good taste.

DCA: What's an average day for you with a movie in production?

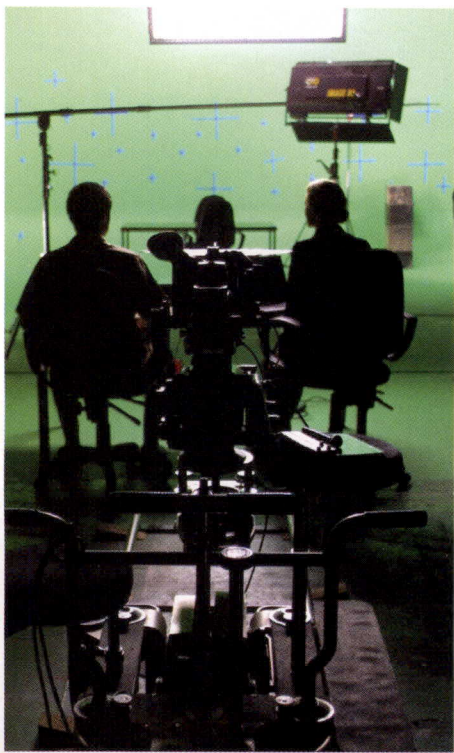
Thomas: If I've done my job properly as a producer, then I should be able to stay in bed! It's like any film; you have callsheets and catering, and you have to keep gearing people up. Things go wrong, but it's no different no matter how much money you have. It's about managing people really. If they're happy they'll solve their own problems.

DCA: What's your next project going to be?

Thomas: Finding money. It's a problem that's facing everybody, but because we have a background in doing it cheaply, we feel we've got an escape route. My feelings are 50/50 about the public money question anyway: it does give support, but it's also killing the entrepreneurial spirit found in the States.

DCA: How can the wannabe filmmaker succeed?

Thomas: Keep your crew tiny; you can always use less people than you think. Never ever wait for someone to give you the chance; it will never come. And if you have the right attitude, then everything else will fall into place.

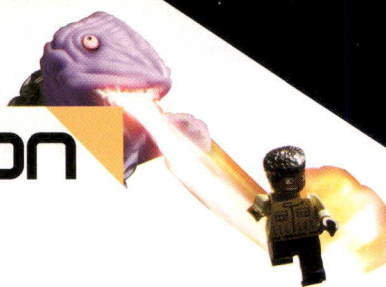


THE SHOOT LIST

8 things to think about as you shoot your film

- Props ☒
- Permits ☒
- Costumes ☒
- Catering ☒
- Wild track ☒
- Clean audio ☒
- Continuity ☒
- Cutaways ☒

POST-PRODUCTION



pay is good and the catering is too. If you're not paying then you will need to be flexible, which is why many first-time directors shoot evening and weekends to work around people's jobs, and even make sarnies themselves to keep the troops happy.

Flexibility will also be key in relation to the script and your budget. No matter how well you've planned, there will always be unforeseen expenses, and unless you can get more money for the kitty, you'll have to make compromises in the way you shoot. Hannah Gal, who recently shot a £33,000 movie called *Peekaboo*, explains that for her, the biggest challenge of low-budget filmmaking is "making creative decisions on the spot where money does not allow literal following of the script. "You have a vision and then the producer tells you

that you are running out of time and cannot afford overtime, so instead of an elaborate scene including two different rooms on two different floors and a staircase, you need to shoot the whole scene in one tiny room. It can be done and in many cases, works out better, but on-the-spot decisions are tough. One missing camera angle can change the entire feel of the scene, and make or break it," she adds.

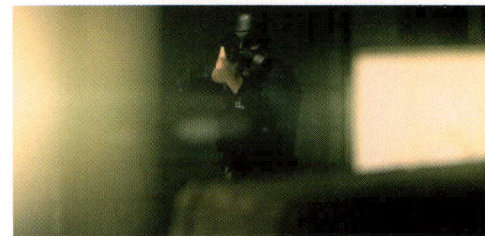
FIND YOUR YODA

A great way to navigate the shark-infested waters of low-budget filmmaking is to find yourself a mentor. This can be anyone who takes an interest in your work, and while they don't have to help you financially, it can be enormously liberating to have

someone you can bounce ideas off, or ask for advice if you need to. Unfortunately, until they set up regular Filmmakers Anonymous meetings, finding someone who'll fulfil this role isn't something you can automatically do. But getting into the industry will mean meeting a lot of people, and while many of these will reject you and your ideas, you're bound to meet a couple you'll click with. All you have to do is appeal to their vanity by telling how impressed you are by their work, and how much weight their opinion holds, and you'll soon be able to ring them for advice when you have a critical decision to make. Who wouldn't want to feel like they were nurturing young talent? Use them, but don't abuse them - and make sure you can do them good deeds when you make it to the top.

While it's easy to fit some filmmaking tasks into one specific stage of the process, there are others that will span pre-production, distribution and beyond. Networking is one of these, and this is basically because you need to keep nurturing your career at the same time as you make your movie.

Networking isn't just about smoozing at festivals to get your flick seen though, and it can be just as useful in finding a great DOP or editor to use. Being out and about and getting your name known is very important, but it mustn't be all you do. As recent Cannes-attendee Hannah Gal notes: "I know quite a few filmmakers with a flimsy story to tell who do an awful lot of 'networking' (as in partying). Do network and meet new people but make sure you still work on that script too," she advises. The great thing



Prey Alone is a 15-minute short and an incredible example of a low-budget movie that has achieved a high-budget look

"The great thing about being a low-budget filmmaker is that a lack of funds forces you to do a hell of a lot yourself"

about being a low-budget filmmaker is that lack of funds forces you to do a hell of a lot yourself. That might not sound like an advantage when it's 4am and you're making sandwiches for a 6am start, but it really is. On a 'professional' film set, everyone has a job, and there are enough people that they can stick to what they're contractually paid to do. Hence Leonardo DiCaprio doesn't carry lights and James Cameron doesn't work the make-up tent. On your first film you probably will do these things, and the likelihood is that you'll edit too. And the advantage is that even if only friends and family see the finished product; you'll know it really was your film.

You see this same level of control in the best professionals too, which is why they often use the same people in key roles over and over again. Martin

Filmmakers on post-production



WRITER/DIRECTOR: Stephen St. Ledger
FILM: *Prey Alone*
URL: www.saintandmather.com

DCA: Where did the germ of the idea for *Prey Alone* come from?

St. Ledger: James Mather and I had been in film school together and we had always talked about trying out some big ideas. Usually, a short film is a study of a situation or a character but James and I wanted to try and do a three-act structured action story... in 15 minutes. We did do some storyboards but they can be limiting - we wanted to shoot *Prey Alone* in a loose fashion. The intention was that it should feel like the camera operator was struggling to keep up with the action, focusing up and sometimes missing the action. It's nearly impossible to storyboard that. It was trial and error... and sometimes we preferred the error.

DCA: What was your production process like?

St. Ledger: James had shown a clip of some jet fighter shots he had done to the producer, John McDonnell, and he went to the Irish Film Board who have a short film award called Short Cuts. We were selected along with five other films. The film was shot entirely on greenscreen on 16mm over four days in Ardmore Studios in Bray. The Irish Film Board were excellent. They approved a green screen offline edit and didn't change a thing. You can't really ask for more than that and all the 3D effects and backgrounds were done on home PCs by James and a few friends.

DCA: How did you achieve that level of animation on ordinary PCs?

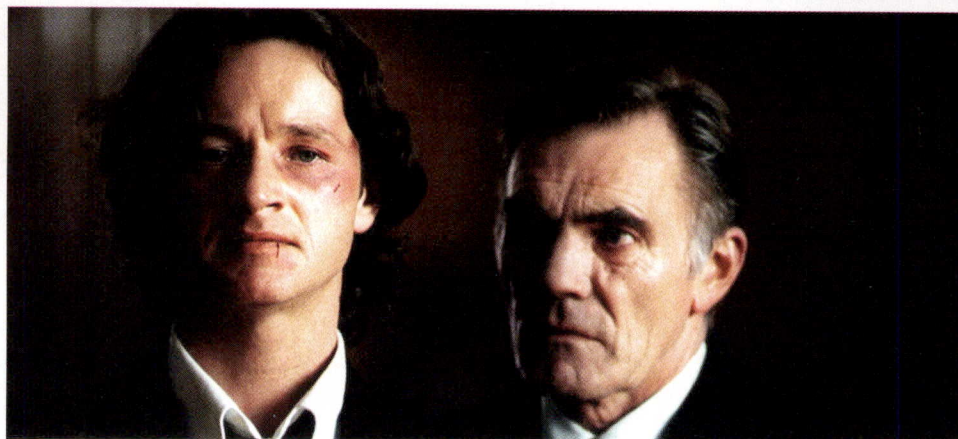
St. Ledger: James set up his own little render farm at home. They were basic PC towers with a couple of them being dual processors. All the backgrounds and effects were created in 3ds max; this is an amazing piece of software because it's so easy to learn and flexible to use.

DCA: What was your budget, and how did that break down (roughly)?

St. Ledger: The budget was £53,000, but what I've learnt is that there's no ratio between the amount of money and the results on film. What does work is energy, passion, knowledge and enthusiasm; having a go and seeing how it fits. To be honest sometimes you can achieve more on your own with good mates than being given a budget. Otherwise it becomes a project and becomes routine, which automatically means restrictive, which is what James and I would like to avoid as much as possible.

DCA: What are you doing with the movie now?

St. Ledger: The response has been huge. We don't really know the film festival scene, but the Internet response has been massive. We've had over 40,000 downloads and thousands of emails from people wanting to see the film. James and I have signed with agents - ICM in the UK and The William Morris Agency in the US - all off the back of the short. So we shall see what happens...



Scorsese usually works with editor Thelma Schoonmaker for instance, and he can relax because he knows that she'll continue to implement his vision. And this ability to work right through the process on a low-budget production is really the gift of digital. After all, getting hold of a camera and shooting has always been possible with a bit of effort, but it's only with MiniDV and programs such as Final Cut Pro that you have really been able to edit your movies to a high standard. Although it's perfectly possible to love shooting itself, it's in the post that digital really gets interesting.

ENDLESS OPTIONS

Whether it's editing, effects or animation you want to do, the software exists to do it. More importantly, this is software that can be run on an ordinary PC or Mac, and while it is expensive, it's not totally out of reach. Also, processor power keeps increasing, which means all the rendering a film requires is getting quicker and smoother. Two filmmakers who are real heroes of the low-budget world are Stephen St. Leger and James Mather, who've just made a short of Hollywood quality using 3ds max. They describe *Prey Alone* as a high-octane thriller, and it was shot entirely against greenscreen and then given animated 3D backgrounds, just as *Sky Captain and the World of Tomorrow* was.

One of the most interesting things you can do in post is give your work the 'film look'. While embracing digital technology is great, most moviegoers still expect that soft, grainy, rich look to their cinematic marvels. You can do that within software or by using special plug-ins, and along with colour correction, this is the deciding factor in how expensive your film looks. And since distributors don't tend to think much of movies made for a pittance (despite the resourcefulness it shows), making your film look like it cost more than it really did can only be a good thing.

If you're still unconvinced about the power of digital, then take a look at *Prey Alone* online for conclusive proof that Hollywood quality is possible from the desktop. Aside from the technology, what's most important to get hold of is someone with the talent to use it. While most people can learn to edit to a reasonable standard, it isn't just anyone who can model and animate successfully. It takes a particular type of vision and patience, and if you

don't possess the urge to spend hundreds of hours painstakingly tweaking NURBS, then you're never going to be up to the job.

DON'T PANIC

But don't worry that your films are going to go unpolished, because this world is full of people who do have modelling and animation skills to show off, and the most likely place to find them is the internet. Again it depends what sort of budget you're working with where you look (finding a team

"One of the best things about shooting on MiniDV is you can create a 35mm print and have your movie shown in cinemas around the world"

of willing and able animation students might be best for those really working at the low end), but you're bound to be able to find people - whether it's just a few skylines you want to enhance, or a whole alien race you want to create.

While CG requirements like that will have been obvious since the script stage - and should therefore have been factored into the budget - they are post-production costs that can creep up on you. For instance, your film might have turned out better than you hoped it might, and instead of the sort of effects work you can muster on your own, you might think it needs a couple of days with a trained flame operator in a post facility. And the great thing about breaking the filmmaking process down into such

Even if you're planning a film that focuses on character (and needs no explosions or aliens), don't forget the importance of post. Elemental Films didn't, as you can see from the richness of *Solid Air*

ONLINE ADVICE

POST PRODUCTION
www.24p.com
www.creativecow.net
www.keyframe.org
www.ukpost.org.uk

bitesize stages is that you can go after new money at any point. There are what are called 'finishing funds' available, or you could simply be so pleased with your edit that you want to take it to a production company or a distributor and see if they want to come on board at that stage, get a share of the movie and pay for some effects, a flash credit sequence, or even a blow-up to a 35mm print.

One of the best things about shooting on MiniDV is that you can create a 35mm print from it, which means that - at least in theory - your movie could be shown in cinemas around the world. Of course it does need to be reasonably high resolution, and shooting with a 3CCD camera is going to be a good start. Find out more about this type of transfer services at www.dvfilm.com, where there are also loads of tips on how to shoot if getting a film print is ever going to be a possibility for you.

Stephen St. Leger's film had a particularly important post-production phase, but his advice is relevant no matter what type or style of movie you want to make: "Everyone has their own ideas, thoughts and dreams. My opinion would be to try and have a go at what you like and try enjoy the process as much as possible. Ignore the business, ignore the analysis, ignore the money and don't self perceive. Just do what you like and see how it fits. Most importantly, enjoy it. Maybe it'll work, maybe it won't, but at the very least you had a go... and your girlfriend still likes you."





So you've made your movie, you're proud of it and your friends and family think it's great. But how do you get the film some proper recognition? With a short, your best bet is to hawk the film around as many film festivals as you can. Ashvin Kumar - whose short *Little Terrorist* received an Oscar nomination this year - had a clear goal when it came to distribution. "The first thing I did was to go to Cannes," he explains. "I got accredited so I got hold of all the right people. I'm surprised to see that the festival circuit really does work. We've got into more than 60 festivals and we keep getting invited to more and more," he adds.

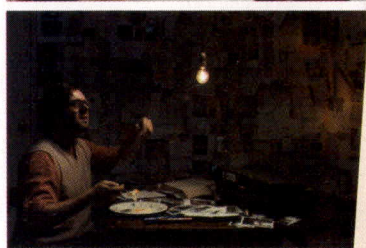
So a festival presence does pay off, as long as you persevere and are willing to travel and to work hard. For the ultimate in recognition, however, it's always nice to win, as Kumar explains: "Once you achieve a level of status by winning a couple of festivals, it becomes easier to be less proactive. I've seen both sides of the coin, I've been extremely proactive and got nothing out of it and now being as lethargic as I can possibly be. None of this is going to make anyone rich, even with the exposure the film is getting." Whatever contacts you

"Whatever contacts you make as you showcase your film at festivals, any publicity is good publicity"

make as you showcase your film at festivals, any publicity is good publicity. There will also be a wide variety of people there who can find different sectors for your film to fill. Ashvin found a niche in educational arenas to begin with and found that the film picked up momentum from there. The compilation and theatrical showcase route is also handy, almost daily Ashvin fields calls asking for *Little Terrorist* to be included on a DVD of shorts or on a tour of Oscar-nominated shorts.

Nowadays people are far more accustomed to finding what they want on the internet, so this is another top place to make a name for your movie. There are even online film festivals for you to get involved in. It does have its drawbacks, however, as Ashvin Kumar found out recently.

"Somebody emailed me the other day and said: 'Listen, I'm very sorry but I had to see your film so I saw it



Little Terrorist and *The Banker* are two short films that have made a name for their directors, which then led to bigger projects

on a peer-to-peer file sharing network and then I showed it to all my friends.' I said thank you very much for telling me all that and he said I must be proud my film was on a p2p network. I said no, I'm pissed off!" Having a website, clips, credits and contact details is certainly a way forward for the marketing of your movie and, with the right push, it can find interest from studios and producers.

While winning awards and gaining exposure is one thing, actually carving a career in the business is another. As Ashvin says: "You can't make money out of short films." To make a short film is to sell yourself and your skills. If the film generates exposure for you, it must be seized upon immediately. "While you're making a short, it is important to have a main project or feature project ready to go," says Ashvin. "At least have a draft for a film that would interest



Filmmakers on distribution

DIRECTOR: Hattie Dalton
PRODUCER: Kelly Broad
FILM: *The Banker*
URL: www.memoryboxfilms.co.uk

DCA: What do you feel is key in the distribution of a film?
Dalton: Know your audience. Intrigue them.

DCA: Do short, feature-length and animated films differ in the way they are distributed?
Dalton: Even though short films are popular, there is no real market for them, theatrically anyway. I think it's a shame because I've gone to short film nights where 90 minutes worth of short films have been shown. People really get their money's worth for a full price ticket. It used to be that a short might be distributed with a feature film, usually shown just before the main screening but now I think that space has been replaced with more advertisements.

Broad: I think all films differ in the way they are distributed. Short films certainly have less avenues to reach audiences, but I think that is changing now as more and more people appreciate shorts for what they are, and we can sell them online, or in compilations with other shorts either on DVD or theatrically.

DCA: What would your advice be to a recently graduated filmmaker looking to do well in the industry?
Dalton: Be involved as much as you can. Read books that inspire you, read scripts of films you love, have an opinion, set achievable goals. Make films that cost no money just for the fun of it. Assume no-one will see these experiments (chances are they will). It's all good practice and gets you and other like-minded people collaborating... and of course watch films!

Broad: Show people what you're capable of. Work hard. Everyday.

DCA: What format do you shoot on?
Dalton: We shot *The Banker* on HD because of budget constraints. The style of the story and the reveal would have been great shot on 35mm but as it turned out I was really happy with what we got. It was scanned to 35mm and the print looks great.

DCA: What do you edit on?
Dalton: My background is in editing and I like cutting the best on Avid. I know the kit so well I don't have to think too much about how to get what I want. I didn't edit *The Banker* because I think the banter in the cutting room with the editor is an essential part of the final film. It is the final draft of the script and I think it's essential to have the objectivity of letting someone else (that you trust) cut it.

ONLINE ADVICE

DISTRIBUTION
www.bbc.co.uk/filmmnetwork/
www.sundanceonlinefilmfestival.org
www.triggerstreet.com
www.ukfilmcouncil.org.uk

the right people because otherwise you lose the head of steam you have and people forget what you've done very quickly."

So there you go; the filmmaking process from first idea to finished film. There's so much to be learnt and so few pages to dedicate to it here, but we leave you safe in the knowledge that there is no substitute for just going for it, come what may. After all, "a film that's finished is never a failure", as Owen Thomas says. Get hold of a camera, a decent script and a willing crew and just go for it. There are always downsides to this struggle, but more important is the cinematic knowledge that you will gain on the journey. So be positive, don't give up, and let us know what you're up to! ✕



From low-budget to high-glamour, Robert Rodriguez is living proof that you can make it the movies

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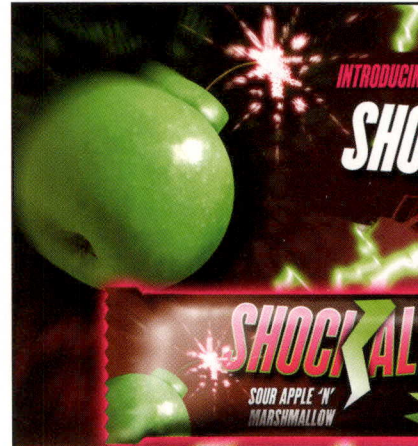
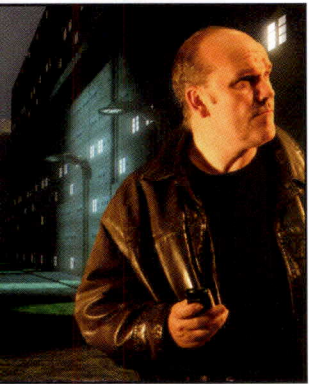
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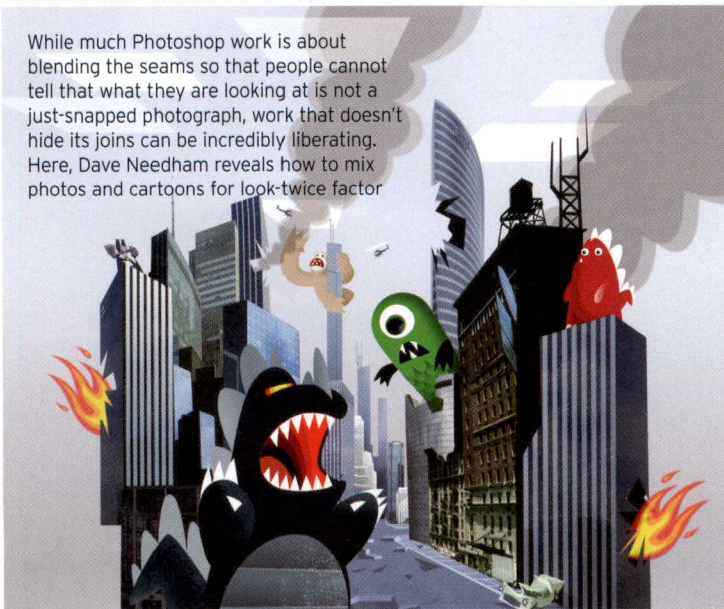


Tutorials



38 Mix 2D and 3D

While much Photoshop work is about blending the seams so that people cannot tell that what they are looking at is not a just-snapped photograph, work that doesn't hide its joins can be incredibly liberating. Here, Dave Needham reveals how to mix photos and cartoons for look-twice factor



48 Create a chocolate wrapper

This issue, we tackle the tricky topic of brand design, and create the wrapping for a new chocolate bar to show how a distinctive - but non-threatening - look can be achieved in Photoshop

58 Design your own dragon

Illustrator is capable of many things, and part of the appeal is increased compatibility within the Creative Suite 2. Here you'll find out how to create a glamorous dragon of your very own

66 Rough up your artwork

Some people doubt it, but Illustrator is capable of creating real texture. Turn to page 66 now to see Illustrator work that's so detailed, it looks like it could have been created in Photoshop

80 Bluescreen on a budget

To further prove that low-budget filmmaking is capable of high-quality results, we challenged ourselves to do some serious effects work for a minuscule amount of cash. Find out what happened...

86 Animate with MotionBuilder

With the MotionBuilder PLE on the cover CD, you can put your character animation skills to the test. Capable of some incredible work, this expert primer will guide you through the intricate options

DAVE NEEDHAM started creating comics while at university, and has worked on Gorillaz, the animated *Mr Bean* and *Monkey Dust*. He's currently co-art directing a new series for Cartoon Network called *Robotboy*. Head to www.centralillustration.com to contact him.



Use Photoshop to mix 2D and 3D images

BUILD A CITY FROM PHOTOGRAPHS, AND THEN CREATE THE MONSTERS THAT WILL TEAR IT DOWN. READ ON, AS WE EXPLORE HOW YOU CAN BLEND DIFFERENT MATERIALS TO CREATE AN ILLUSTRATION THAT REALLY JUMPS OUT AT YOU

The focus of this workshop is the creation of an image that mixes digital photography with computer-built characters, and therefore places 2D cartoon characters on a 3D street. The inspiration for the image comes from film posters for movies such as *King Kong* and *Godzilla*. The idea is to create a huge metropolis from various elements of the digital photographs, and then to populate it with a bunch of mess-making monsters!

As you'll see, the first thing to do is go out and take your own photographs of buildings, trees and roads to use (from which you will build the environment), or you can use the ones supplied on the cover CD. Most of the buildings supplied here were photographed at La Defence, just outside Paris. When taking the pictures, it helps to bear in mind the style of architecture you want, how tall the buildings need to be and which direction they will be facing to work effectively in the compositional sketch. In this way, a library of potential elements is acquired, which

you can then bring into Photoshop. The next stage of the process is to tackle your photos. Essentially, the snaps need to be cut out - collage style - and manipulated with the Transform tool to build the backdrop. This part of the process allows the final illustration to develop a life of its own. It's a great way of experimenting and trying things that can improve and change the direction of the finished illustration. For instance, all your buildings can be flopped, duplicated and re-coloured. It's quite easy in this way to create a city that looks huge, but is built from just a small number of pictures.

When the photographic background has been finished, it's then time to start drawing in monsters to fit the surroundings. You'll mainly use the Path tool here to retrace the characters on multiple layers. After the basic characters are ready, we need to use gradients and airbrushing to create highlights and shadows, which will lend the designs depth and weight. A variety of techniques will be used to add texture to the beasts and to create scales and other details.

Finally, you'll have to create a little destruction. Chunks can be torn out of buildings, and debris scattered over the ground. Special effects such as smoke and fire are also to be added, and some subtle use of the Gaussian Blur will bring depth and action to the finished image. So let's get started!

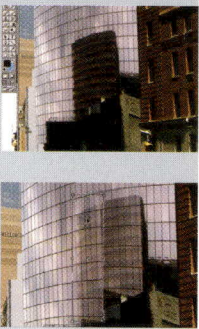




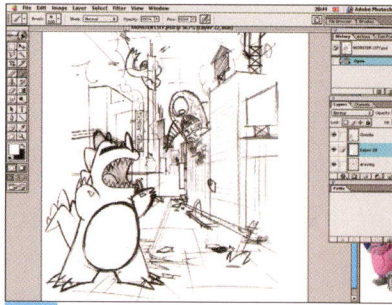
ON THE CD

Photos folder
Textures folder

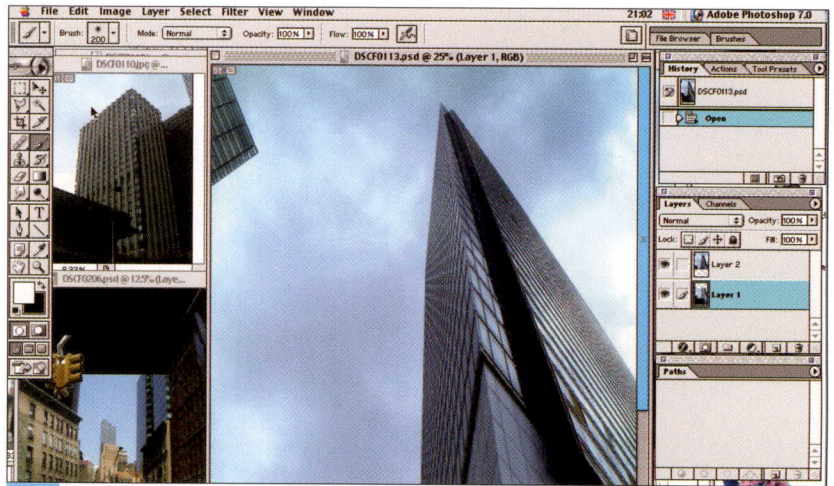
COVERING UP



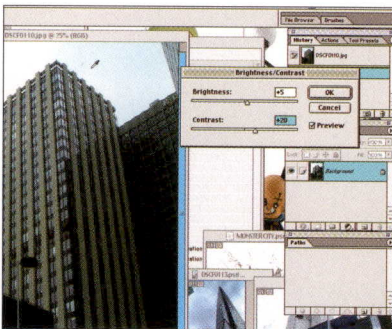
It is sometimes necessary to hide unwanted elements that appear in your photographs. In this case, it's the reflection of another building, which is making the front of our skyscraper look odd. First, make a selection from the 'good' area next to the bit you want to cover up. Next, copy and paste it, so you have it on a new layer. Set this layer to about 70% Opacity. This makes it easier to see what you're doing when manipulating the patch. Use the Free Transform tool to place the patch in position and take your time to make sure it covers it seamlessly. In this example, the curved lines on the skyscraper make this a bit tricky, but be persistent and you'll get there!



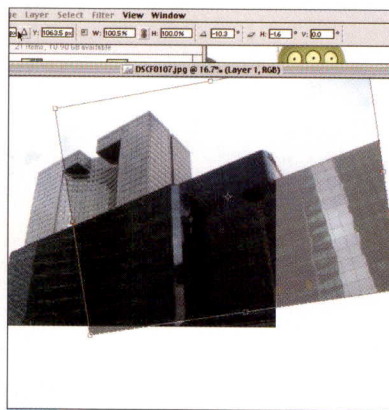
01 COMPOSITIONAL SKETCH: Begin by roughing out your own basic composition. Block in the roads and buildings, and then position the monsters and other characters, so you have a good idea of the basic layout. It doesn't have to be too detailed. Even a rough sketch will be a big help when selecting photographs. Scan the image at 300 dpi, and open it in Photoshop. Increase your canvas size so you give plenty of space around it.



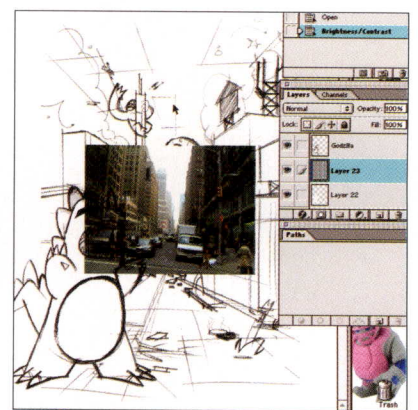
02 SEE YOUR SNAPS: Start by selecting the photographs you want to work with. Remember that sometimes you can just select one or two details from the picture, rather than the whole building. As you spend time doing this, try and form ideas about which elements will improve your finished illustration. It may change, but at least you know where you're heading.



03 BRIGHTEN UP: As you are browsing through the photographs, select the Brightness/Contrast control, and use it to adjust the pictures to make them as strong as they can be. Generally it works best to increase the Contrast a little, and then tweak the Brightness as much as you dare. The Hue/Saturation tool may be used in the same way, with the aim always being to get the most out of your pictures.



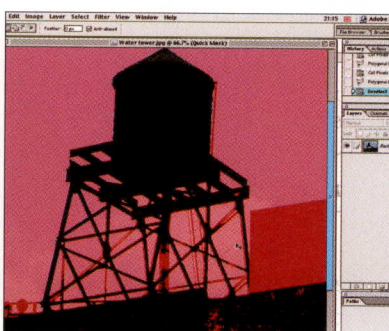
04 BE MANIPULATIVE: You may want to use multiple photographs to make up one building. In order to make it seamless, it is necessary to drag them all into one file and to use Free Transform to position and distort the layers as you need them. Finally, adjust the Brightness/Contrast again to match them up.



05 MESS IT UP: Drag your selected photos into into one main image, and then try out how the buildings work in various positions. Think about which elements work best in the foreground and background, and then decide if you're going to use the whole picture or just a part of it.



06 CUT IT UP: In most cases, you'll only want to use very specific elements from a photo. You should use the Selection tool to pick out the parts that you want, and make sure you zoom in close to make sure all the smallest details are kept.



07 USE THE MASK: Sometimes with more complicated elements, such as this water tower, the Selection tool is not enough. So, make a rough selection, and click on Quick Mask. Continue until you have neatly picked out all the areas needed. Exit Quick Mask and then copy and paste your new selection.



08 DISTORTED REALITY: Play around with the Free Transform tool for as long as it takes to make sure the buildings look right together, and that its perspective is correct. Grab the corner boxes of the Transform area, and pull them about until you get what you want. Press Return when you're happy.

STEP INTO
THE SHADOWS

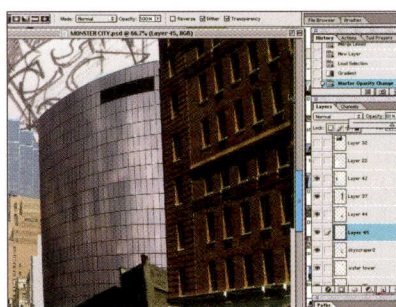
To add depth and contrast to a building, use a gradient to create some shadows. First, cut out the building from the background by using the Selection tool, and then copy and paste it to its own layer.



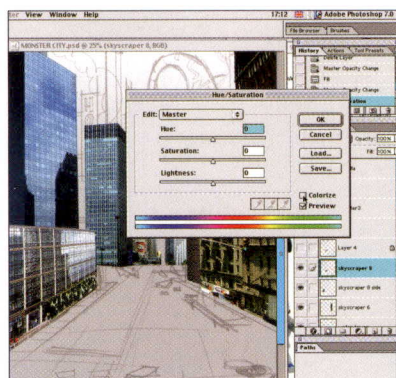
Now make a new layer in front of the skyscraper. Use the Marquee tool or the Pen tool to select the area you wish to shade. Then select the Gradient tool, and set it so that it fades out to transparent, adding a nice shadow.



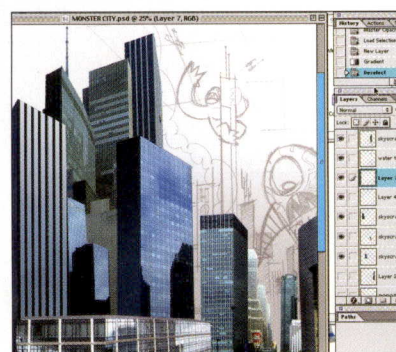
Finally, make an inverse selection of the building layer, and cut out any unnecessary shading from your shadow layer. Reduce the darkness of the shadow layer by dropping the Opacity of the layer.



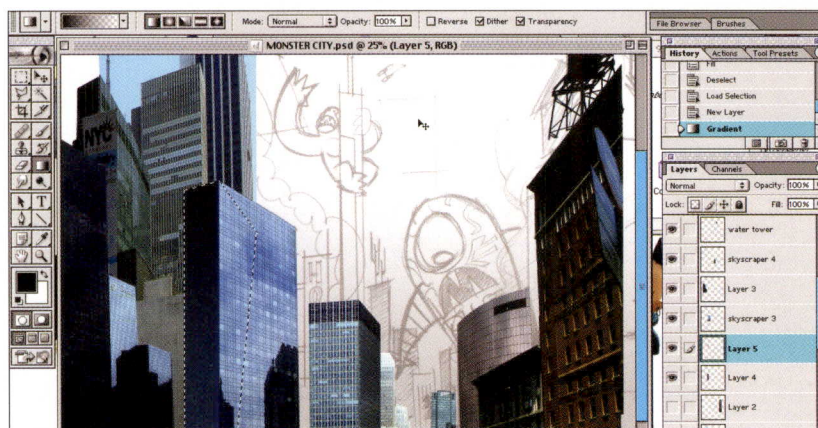
09 ADDING DEPTH: Make a new layer above the building you want to work on. Hold down the Apple key and click on the building layer, so a selection appears. Now, on the new layer, use the Gradient tool (set at Fades to Transparent) to add shading to the building's surface. Turn down the Opacity.



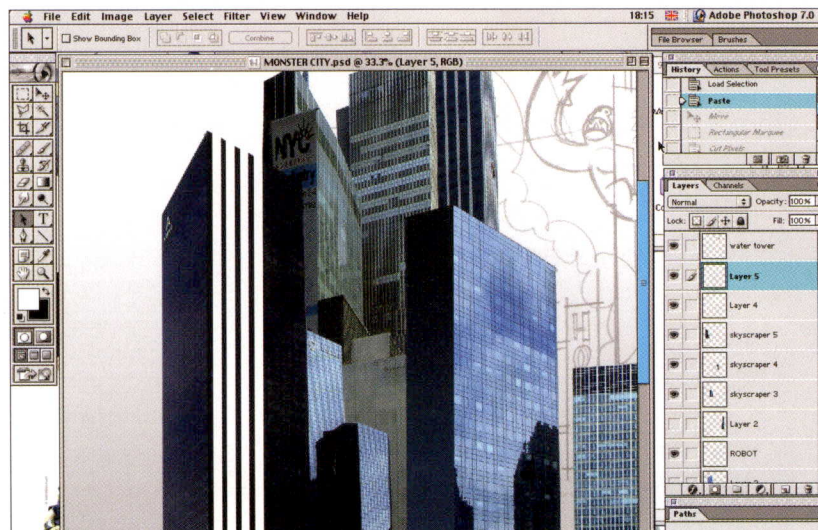
11 ALL THE PRETTY COLOURS: You can also adjust the colour of the buildings you have in place. Hold down the Apple key and click on the layer of the building to adjust as needed. Next copy and paste it, so you have two identical layers. Select the front-most layer, and open the Hue/Saturation panel. With a rich blue selected, click the Colorize box. Now reduce the Opacity of the layer so that some of the original colour shows through.



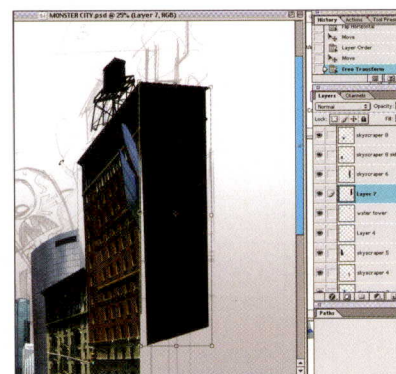
13 POLISH YOUR PANES: Now reduce the Opacity of the window layer, and then make a new layer. Use the Gradient tool to add highlights. Select the original window layer and inverse the selection. Cut out the unwanted parts of the gradient layer, and reduce the Opacity slightly.



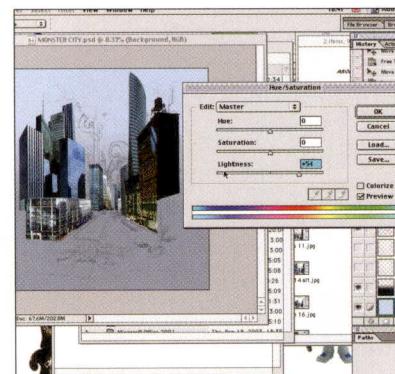
10 BUILD YOUR OWN ELEMENTS: To further supplement your skyline, some parts of the buildings can be generated entirely in Photoshop. You can do this in a number of different ways, including using the Pen tool or the Shape tools, or by copying building you're already using. Then fill them with appropriate colours, and use the Gradient tool to create shadows.



12 DO IT YOURSELF WINDOWS: Make a tall thin rectangular selection, on a layer above the skyscraper, and fill with pure white. Duplicate the layer, and position them next to each other. Merge the two layers, and repeat the process until you have enough to cover the front of the building. Make an inverse selection of the building, and then cut out.

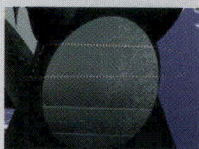


14 ANOTHER SIDE: Trace the existing side of the building with the Selection tool. On a new layer fill the selection. Now use the Transform tool to flip the layer the other way around. Keep using the Transform tool to position the new side of the skyscraper.



15 PUT THE SKY IN: Fill the Background layer with a pale blue, and then make a new layer just in front of it. On this layer, use the Gradient tool to darken the lower part of the image. By now, the illustration is starting to take shape.

THE DEVIL IS IN THE DETAILS



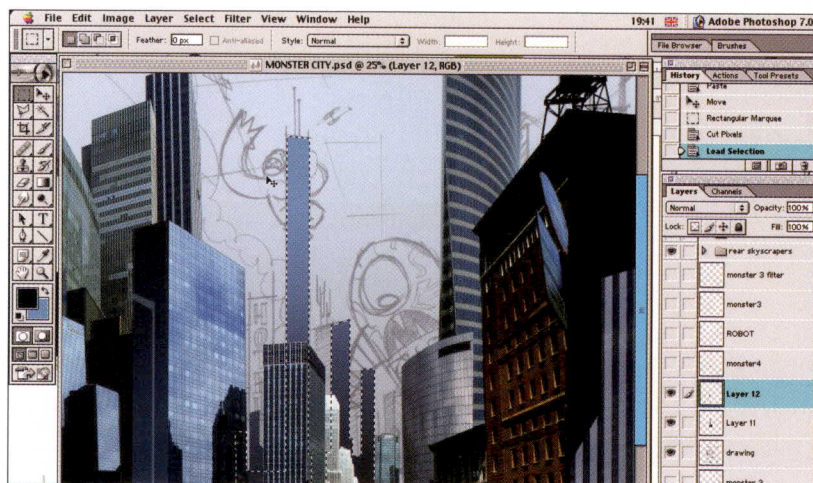
Open a new layer in front of the one you want to add the details to (your monster's belly in this case). Use the Line tool to break up the belly into separate parts.



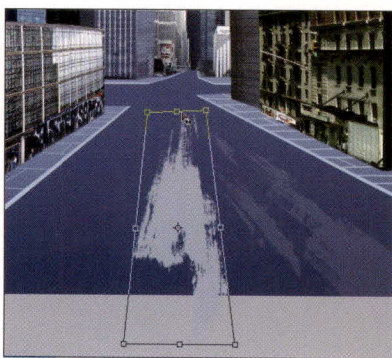
Now select each part in turn, and on a new layer, make a selection around the area you wish to adjust. Use the Gradient tool to add a shadow; if you want to try something different here, then the sponge texture can be used instead. Finally, adjust the Opacity to keep the shading subtle.



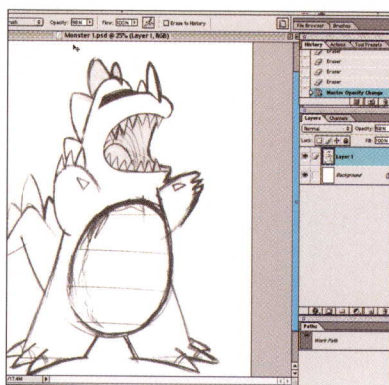
Just rinse and repeat the process until the belly area gets pretty bumpy.



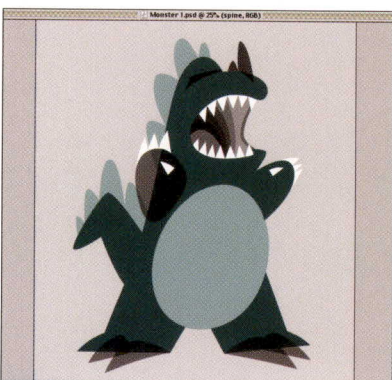
16 GENERATING SKYSCRAPERS: On a new layer behind all the other buildings, use the Marquee tool to make some basic skyscraper shapes. Fill them in with a darker blue than the sky behind, and then lock the layer. Now choose a slightly darker blue again, and use the Airbrush tool on a low Flow and Opacity setting to add shadows.



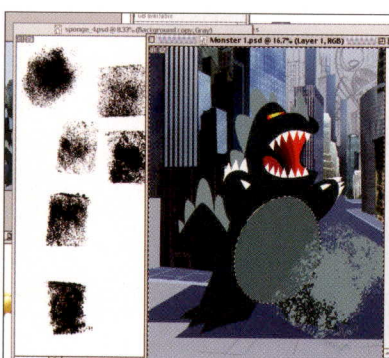
18 USING TEXTURE: To make the surface of the road more realistic, copy and paste one of the dry brush textures onto a layer just in front of the road. Lock the layer and fill it with a pale grey blue. Now use the Transform tool to make the texture work in perspective. Try reducing the Opacity to keep the effect subtle.



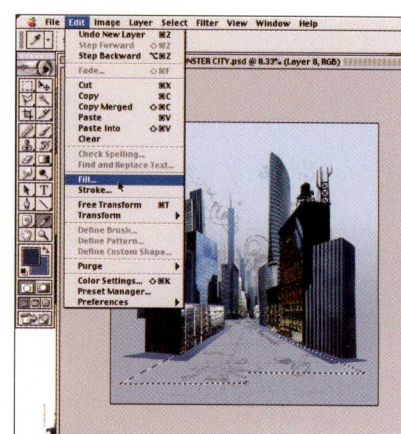
19 SCARY STUFF: Sketch a monster and then scan it in at 300 dpi. Duplicate the layer, and fill the background in white. On the layer with the drawing, knock the Opacity down to about 50% and try to imagine the monsters as a collection of simple shapes.



21 BASIC COLOUR: Lock all of the layers, and begin filling them with colour. Try and keep it simple, by generally staying in one colour range (here it's green). Pick a dark, mid and light version, and then when you really want to draw attention to one area, you can finally use a contrasting colour.



22 USE A SPONGE: Copy and paste one of the sponge textures onto a layer in front of the monster. Lock the layer and fill it with light green. Then position it to create an interesting highlight (here it is used on the monster's belly). Cut off the unnecessary parts by making an inverted selection of the area you want to cover.



17 ROADWORKS: Make a new layer, and then use a similar process to the last step, until you have a basic road shape. Then, lock the layer and use the Gradient tool to make the road appear lighter in the distance.

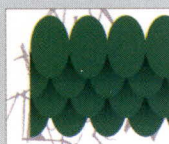


20 BUILDING SHAPES: Being careful to keep all the elements on separate layers, start to trace the drawing using the Path tool. Fill the paths in black as you go along, and keep each layer around 50% transparent. Manage the layers so that they reflect which elements would actually be closer to us. For example, the tail would be behind the body.



23 SHADE TO GREY: Choosing each of the elements in turn, use the Airbrush tool to add shadows. For maximum control, always work on a new layer in front of the one you want to shade and use the Opacity control to get just the right amount of darkness.

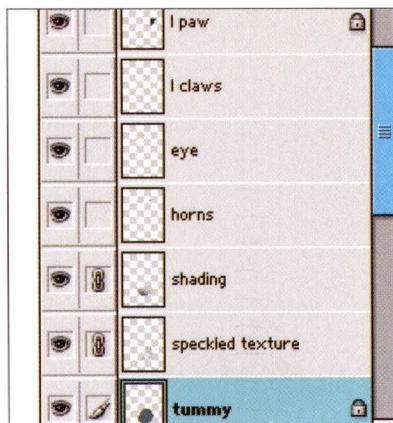
MAKING SCALES



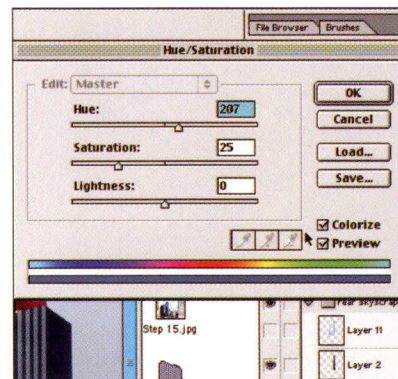
Open a new layer and, with the Ellipse tool, make a nice ellipse and then duplicate it. Position it next to the first one, so it is just touching. Now merge the layers. Duplicate this layer, and position the two new ellipses next to the first ones, giving you a row of four. Again, merge the two layers. Next, lock the layer and fill it with colour. Copy and paste this layer, and position it in an offset way on the layer directly below the first. With the layer locked, use the Gradient tool to make a shadow. Repeat this process until you have enough rows to cover your monster. Now merge all the scales onto one layer, and adjust them with the Transform tool.



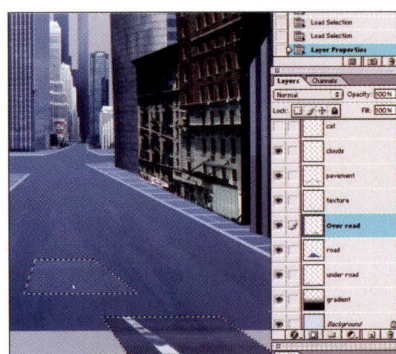
24 HIGHLIGHT HEAVEN: The method here is exactly the same as in the previous step. Just select a much lighter colour, and always work on a new layer. When you're happy with the highlights and shadows, merge all the separate elements, and drag the layer into the main illustration.



25 ADD AND ADJUST: Make sure you save a layered version of the monster too. Adjustments can then be made to the elements and the colours as the main illustration progresses. Here the belly is repositioned to help the form of the monster.



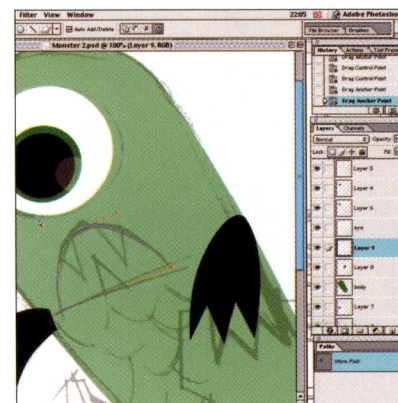
26 BALANCING COLOURS: In order to add depth, we need to keep the buildings that are more distant lighter and closer to each other in terms of colour. Make a selection that covers all the furthest buildings, and make a new layer. Fill this layer with a pale blue, and then reduce the Opacity to about 20%.



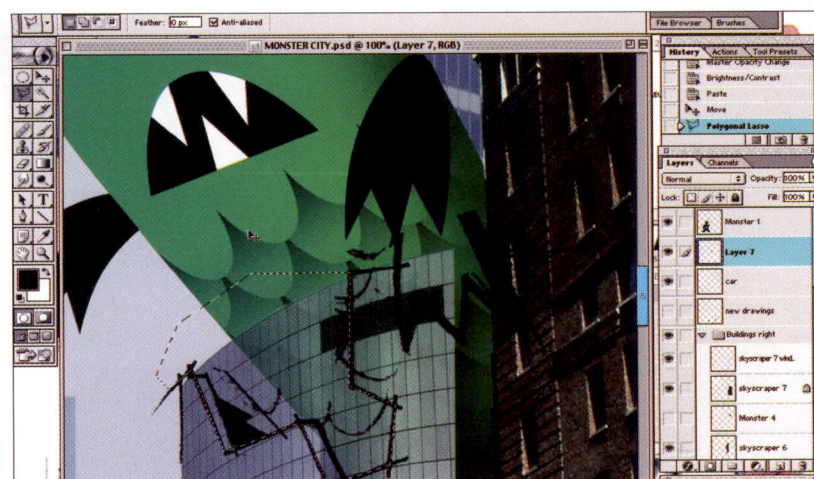
27 STYLISTIC DETAILS: To enforce the perspective of the composition, cut out pieces of road from various photographs and transform or cut them into shape. The same technique is also used to make clouds. Set the shapes at various different opacities, and experiment by trying them in front or behind of the other layers.



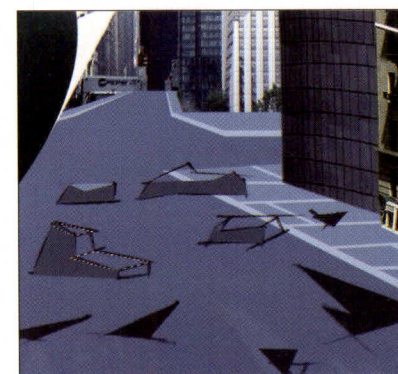
28 MORE MONSTERS: Pose some of the monsters to fit the environment. This one is going to be behind some of the skyscrapers on the right. The idea is that he's knocked the top part of the building over.



29 PATH TO PERFECTION: The basic technique of using paths to build up the elements on separate layers is common to all the characters. Try experimenting with different combinations of colours though.



30 KNOCKING THEM DOWN: To perform this trick, select the building layer that is going to be damaged, and make it transparent. Use the Marquee tool to cut out the damaged area. Make a new layer behind the building and use the Marquee tool to build up some wall thickness.

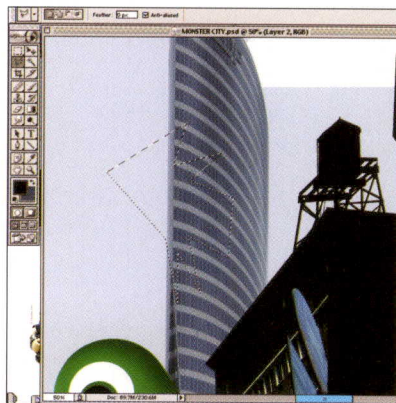


31 ADD MORE DAMAGE: Use the Marquee tool to make shapes that look like they've fallen from the skyscrapers. Make three layers, one for the basic shape, one for the shadow side and one for the highlighted side. Finally, merge the layers when the colour balance is right.

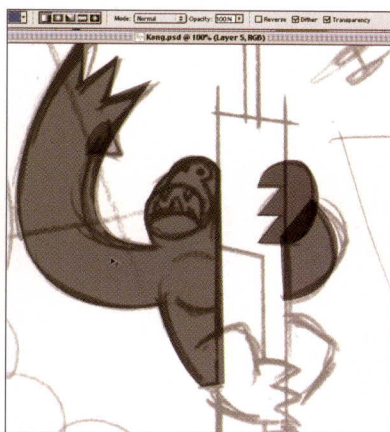
CREATURE COMFORTS



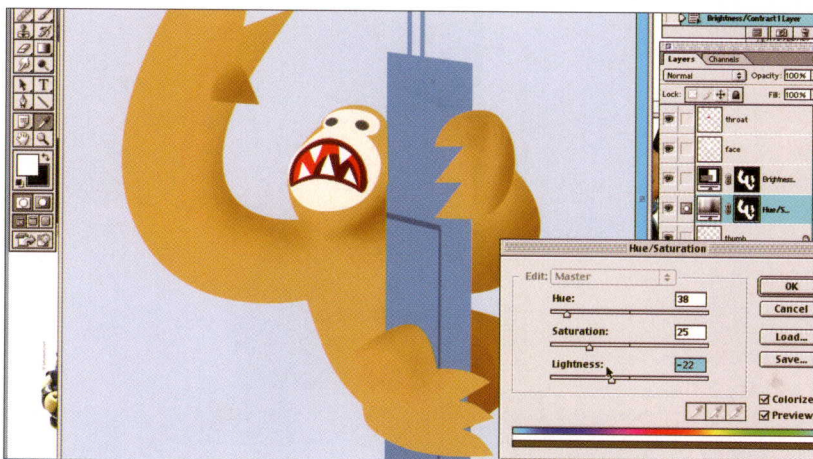
There just isn't enough space here to go through every single step of every single character. All the characters were created using the same basic method, however, so you can go off and create your own. From starting life as a rough sketch, the design is traced in paths on separate layers, and then coloured, detailed and adjusted as necessary. When you design your characters - whether they're fantastic beasts or just cats - it always helps to keep your design clear and simple. A really good design always has a strong silhouette. Above you can see just how rough the initial sketch can be.



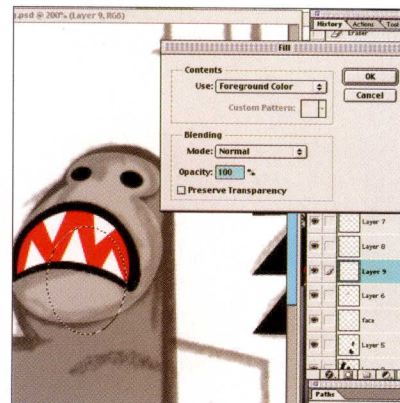
32 MAKE DRAMATIC SHAPES: When adding damage, try to use the Marquee tool to make dramatic shapes that will add to the final composition. Always add a layer below the skyscraper to show the inside. It will look best if it contrasts with the outside. If the outside is light, then make the damage dark.



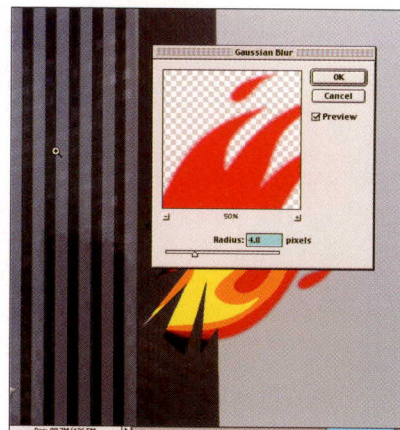
33 MONKEY MADNESS: Climbing one of the skyscrapers in the distance is a giant ape. This character is again constructed with the Path tool. When designing these monsters, try and keep its posing clear, so that it reads as a clear silhouette.



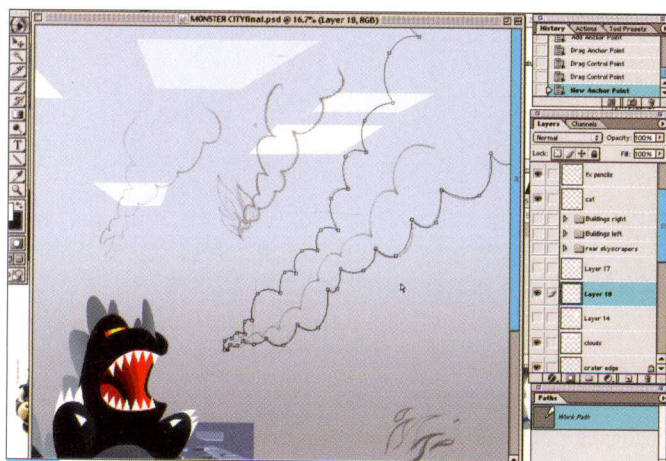
35 ADJUSTING COLOURS: To change the colour of something that is on many separate layers, first select all the layers which you want to apply the change to. Then click the Adjustment Layer icon (the half black, half white circle), and then select Hue/Saturation. This prevents having to merge layers before adjusting colours.



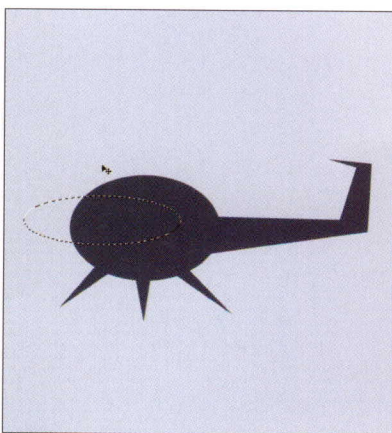
34 MONSTER MOUTHS: The mouth area is made up of four layers, one each for the lips and teeth, and two for the throat. Try to keep the shapes strong to keep the character clear, even if it is going to be quite small in the finished illustration.



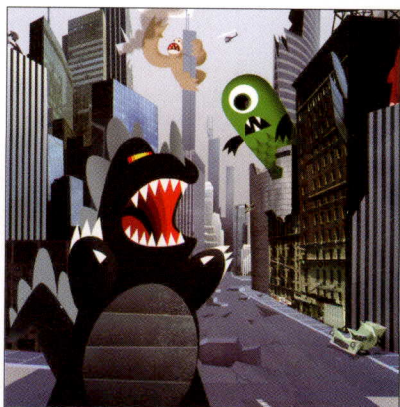
36 SPECIAL EFFECTS: You can build effects using paths to create the shapes, and then making each layer slightly transparent. For things like fire, try the Gaussian Blur filter, and set it to a radius of about 5 pixels.



37 MORE SPECIAL EFFECTS: Smoke is made in exactly the same way. In this case, the sketch of the smoke is matched to one of the damaged skyscrapers. Trace the sketch in paths, and then duplicate the layer and offset them from each other, before then reducing the Opacity on both.



38 FINISHING TOUCHES: Finally, add all the little details that will bring action to the image. The same techniques again apply. Here a simple helicopter is made up of basic shapes such as triangles and ellipses.

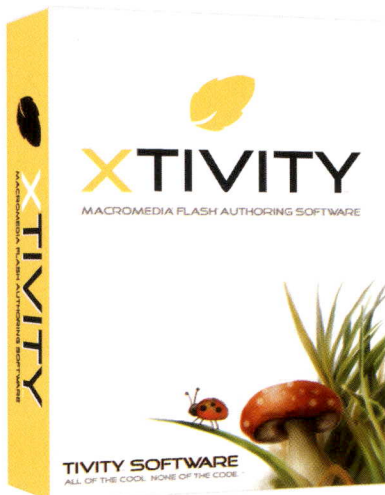


39 AND FINALLY: Tweak until you're happy with your illustration. Hopefully that's proved that the blending of digital photographs with computer-built characters can create some interesting imagery, particularly if you take great care with colour.

All of the Cool None of the Code



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Create a chocolate wrapper in Photoshop

QUESTIONS OF COLOUR AND TASTE COME INTO PLAY WHEN DESIGNING PACKAGING. SO, LET'S CONCOCT A NEW PRODUCT AND THEN GIVE IT WITH A CLEAR IDENTITY...

Normally the real fun of designing is when you're in the thick of it, seeing that little spark you had in your head turn into something tangible. However, it's the stages you need to go through before you get that little spark which are the most important ones.

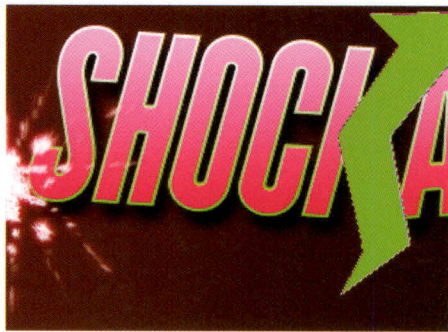
Yes that's right, you always need to do your research, because it's through research that your final piece will be stronger and richer in detail. If you're researching traditional Japanese printing techniques, then you'd better get yourself down to the library, or if you're feeling particularly flush, Waterstones. If you're studying, say, Edwardian sculpture, then get onto Google to find your nearest exhibition and so forth. It's hard work, but it's fun too, and to be honest, (unless perhaps you're working for Pixar), you can't have much more fun in the research phase as when you're designing a chocolate bar.

Perhaps it's been a while since you trawled the aisles of your local supermarket, hunting down your favourite sugar-based snack. But like riding a bike, it's one of those things you'll never forget how to do. So arm yourself with

some pocket money, and get yourself down to your local sweetie emporium. What you'll notice immediately is how each wrapper competes for your attention. Some scream luxury indulgence, some scream low-carb assurance, and some, frankly, just scream. Take note of how the various graphical styles suggest different taste 'experiences', and therefore attempt to appeal to a certain audience. Then there are all those household names that we recognise as much for the branding and typefaces as we do for their actual names.

The most important point about all this is that we automatically associate how they look with how they taste. This is true of all food packaging to an extent of course, but with chocolate bars the effect is more pronounced. Remember, we really want to create something that looks good enough to eat.

Our thinking was that if you were to launch a new chocolate bar onto the market today, it would be extremely difficult to compete with the established brands. You'd really need to stand out, and that comes down to: the name, the lettering, the colours and the imagery, even the flavour. Maybe sour apple and marshmallow pieces wouldn't be your thing, but green and pink certainly make for a striking image. The techniques we're going to demonstrate will be applicable to various styles, which will be useful as the great thing about a project like this is that there's billboards and flyers to be designed, as well as the wrapper itself. Try not to get chocolate smudges on the magazine!



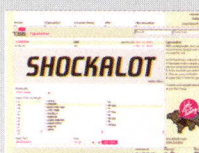
ON THE CD

apple.jpg
apple_stalk.psd
bar.jpg
sweets.psd

WHAT TYPE OF TYPE?



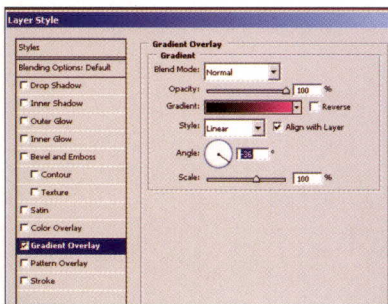
In branding of any kind, the font you use is incredibly important. If you're trying to encourage someone to purchase a new product, any visual signal suggesting this might be something they'd like should be maximised. Of course, typography is a whole design school unto itself, but fundamentally, try and think about how letterforms give off certain signals. This can be down to the shapes themselves, or even depending on the context of where you've seen a similar kind of typeface before.



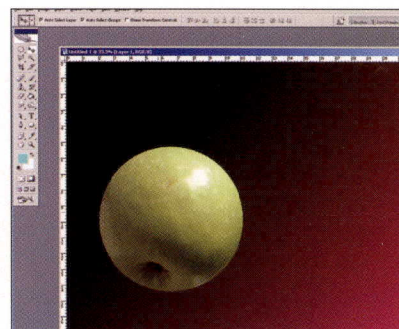
The main font we've used in this tutorial was purchased from www.t26.com. There are many type foundries out there, but the t26 typesetter is worth taking for a spin, because you can preview the font with the phrase or name you're thinking of using.



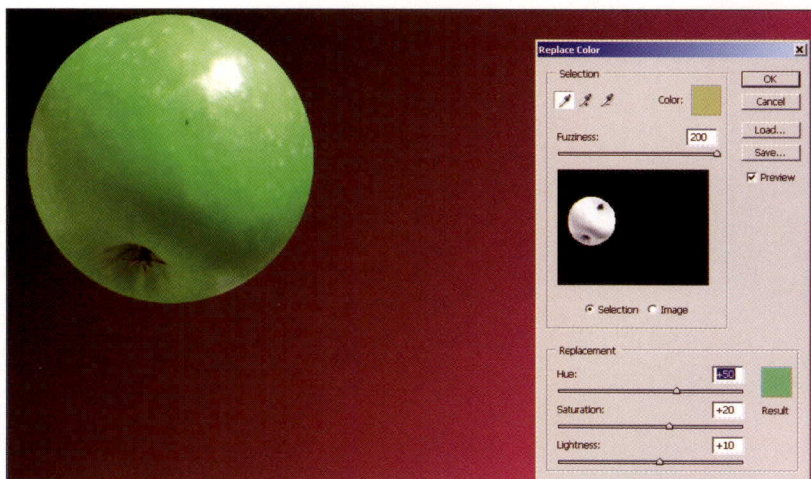
01 MARKET RESEARCH: Before starting any brand design, you need to familiarise yourself with what's out there. Study how one brand tries to distinguish itself from another, or even tries to imitate one. Think about what area you want your product to fall into, and get sketching. No idea is too extreme, so just doodle and brainstorm until you come up with a concept you can run with.



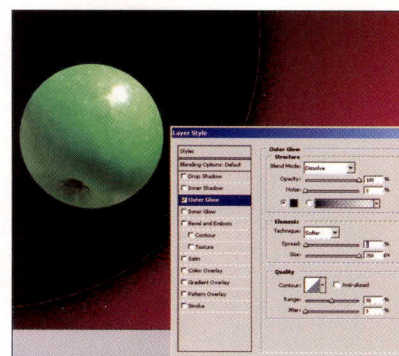
02 GETTING DIGITAL: You're no doubt keen to come up with your own branding, but we'll show you how we arrived at our design first. Create a new document in Photoshop that's 290x220 mm, at 300 dpi. Create a new layer, and call it 'bck'. Fill it in with any colour, then go to Layer>Layer Style>Gradient Overlay. At an angle of -36°, create a gradient that fades from dark brown to a strong pink.



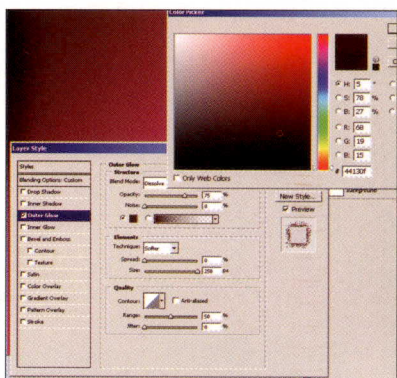
03 PERFECTLY ROUND: Open the file from the cover disc called 'apple.jpg'. Select the Elliptical Marquee tool from the top left of the Tools palette. Hold down the Shift key to constrain the marquee to a circle, and select as much of the apple as possible. Copy and paste this perfect apple onto the main canvas and save your file.



04 INTENSIFY THE COLOUR: Move the apple roughly to the position shown. Go to Image>Adjustments>Replace Color. Click on a mid-tone from the apple, then drag the Fuzziness slider up to 200. This is so we can change the tone of the whole apple with one adjustment. Set the Hue to +50, Saturation to +20, and Lightness to +10. Click OK to render the results.



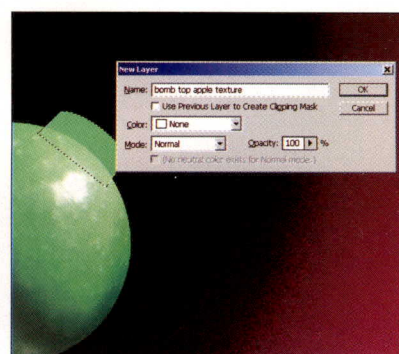
05 A BIGGER CIRCLE: To bring the apple into context, use the Ellipse tool to draw a large brown circle on a layer behind the apple. Again, hold down Shift to constrain the circle as you draw. Go to Layer>Layer Styles>Outer Glow. Set the Blend Mode to Dissolve, Opacity to 100%, Noise to 0%, Spread to 1% and Size to 250px. The glow colour should be the same as the circle colour.



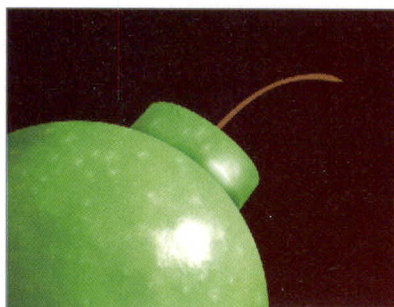
06 ONCE MORE WITH FEELING: Add a new layer beneath the circle. Select the circle layer again, and from the Layer Options menu click on Merge Down. This rasterizes the layer effects. Set the Blending Mode of the layer to Soft Light. Add another Outer Glow, this time using a lighter brown, and then set the Opacity to 75%.



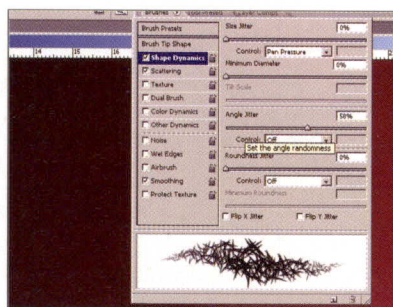
07 LOSE BLEMISHES: The apple photograph isn't perfect. Select the Clone Stamp tool, and choose a soft-edged brush from the default set, putting the size to around 100. Hold down the Alt key and then click on the area you want to clone from (preferably close to the blemish), and then clean up the surface where needed. Just a few simple strokes should do it; don't overwork it.



08 CORE ROTATION: We want the apple to point inward, so rotate it 30° clockwise using the Transform tools. Set up a layer beneath the apple, and use the Pen tools to create a shape for the cartoon bomb top. With the shape selected, click on the Paths tab. From the Options menu, choose Make Selection. Click OK to make a marquee the same shape, and return to the Layers palette.



09 TEXTURE TO THE TOP: Use the Clone Stamp tool again to paint some texture from the apple photo onto the top. Add another layer above, and set up a Marquee so you can paint in a dark green shadow where the apple meets the top. Use a soft-edged Eraser to reduce the harshness of the shadow. Now draw a new path for the stalk/fuse, and use the texture from the 'apple_stalk.psd' file from the cover disc in the same way.



10 A TASTE EXPLOSION: Create a new layer beneath the apple, called 'sparks'. Select brushes, then click the small downward arrow next to where the brush diameter is displayed. From the palette that opens, click the top-right arrow, and select Calligraphic Brushes. Scroll down until you get to the Flat 35px. At the top right of the interface you'll see the Brushes tab. Check the Scatter box and set the Scatter to 133%. Turn on Shape Dynamics and set the Angle Jitter to 58%.



11 IT'S GONNA BLOW: Paint some sparks radiating out from the end of the fuse. Make the brush size gradually smaller as you move out from the center. Apply Outer Glow and white Colour Overlay layer styles. The glow should now be a strong pink, with the blend mode set to Screen, and the Opacity at 75%. Set the Spread to 1% and the Size to 40px. Go to Filter>Blur>Radial Blur and set a Zoom Blur of about 30 pixels out from the center of the sparks.

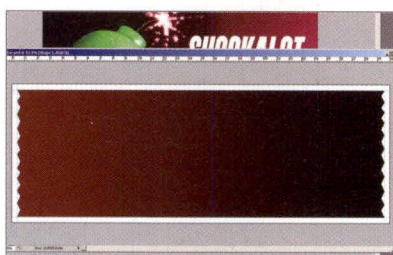
WHY USE CERTAIN COLOURS?



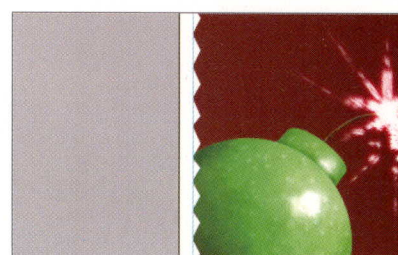
The main colours that give our imagery impact are the green and pink. This is partly because they're bright (and contrast with the deep browns we've used), but also because they are complementary colours. Colour theory is a huge subject, and as a designer you're probably going to be as motivated by instinct as much as theory. Still, it may be worth heading over to Google to have a look into it a bit more. It's also worth visiting a website called Color in Motion, which looks at colour symbolism and communication. You'll find it at www.mariaclaudiacortes.com.



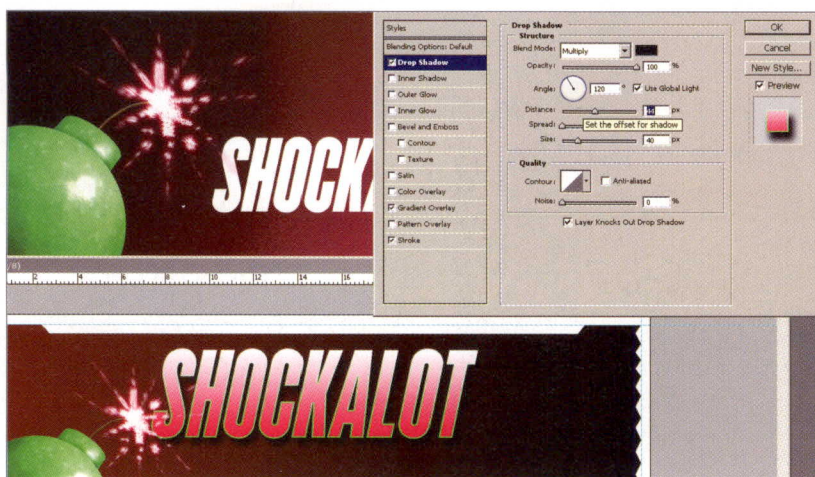
12 A BRAND FONT: Before we move on to the actual packaging, it's time to choose the right font. We've used one called Cactus Black Italic, because it gives the kind of impact we want. It's available to purchase from www.t26.com. Try typing the brand name in letters of 120pt, and you'll see the branding is really starting to come together. Put all the apple elements into a layer group.



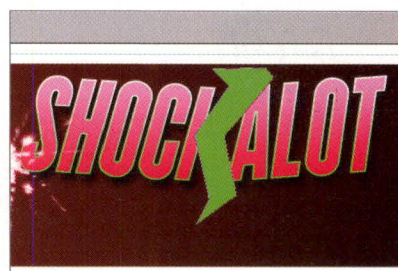
13 THE BAR ITSELF: Create a new document that's 30x10 cm, at 300dpi. Go to View>Rulers if you've not got them on already, and drag in guides at 40mm in from the edges. Draw a rectangle in this space, applying a Gradient Overlay style that goes from light to dark brown from left to right. Use the Add Anchor Point tool to add 12 triangular points to each side, and the Convert Point tool to ensure they're straight.



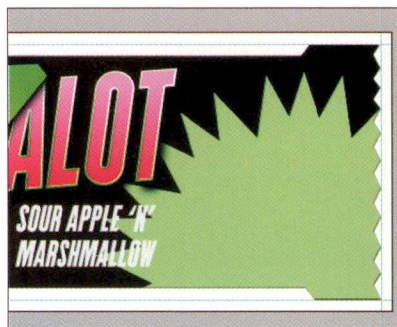
14 RECYCLED APPLES: Add extra points so the bar itself sits within larger end 'flaps'. Go to the Paths tab and select Make Selection from the Options menu. Go back to the main document, and duplicate the apple group. Merge the group, go to Select>All, and copy the apple. Hide the group beneath for now, and return to the bar. Go to Edit>Paste Into and drag the apple to the far left. Scale it down to 60%.



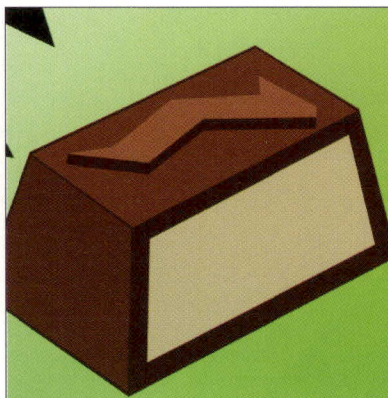
15 STRIKING TYPE: Use Cactus Black Italic (or any other font you care to) and type the brand name nice and large at 140px. Add a Stroke>Gradient Overlay>Drop Shadow. The stroke should be set to 8 pixels inside, with a gradient Fill type that goes from white to bright green vertically. Put the drop shadow at 100% Opacity on Multiply blend mode, with a Distance of 44px and a Size of 40px. The gradient overlay goes vertically from white to a strong pink.



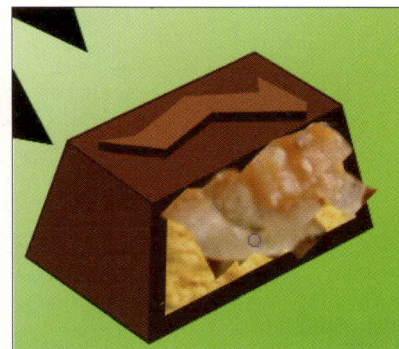
16 SHATTERED TYPE: Right-click (Apple+click on Macs) on the Layers palette next to the layer name, and select Rasterize layer. Use the Polygonal Lasso to select the first half of the lettering, and create a split in the 'K'. Move the selected area away slightly to the left, and rotate it by 4°. Rotate the other side of the text the other way, then use the pen tools to create a lightning bolt shape over the right side of the 'K'.



17 LOVE CHOCOLATE: Duplicate the layer with the apple to preserve the mask, and then delete the apple. Select the Custom Shape tool and, from the Shapes set, choose the 10pt star. Draw one over the right side edge of the bar that's big enough to show a preview of the chocolate. Merge this layer down once you've got it in place, preserving the layer mask. Duplicate this layer twice, rotating the stars to add more points, and then merge the layers together.



18 HOW THE BAR LOOKS: Apply a Gradient Overlay to the star that fades from a pale green into a stronger one on the right. Now it's time to show the chocolate, so use the Pen tools to build up a simple outline of one of the pieces. Use the lightning bolt from the logo to decorate the top.

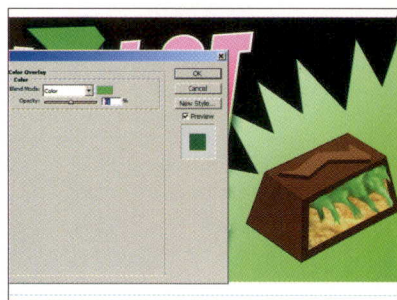


19 REAL BISCUIT TEXTURES: Open the file from the cover disc called 'bar.jpg'. Use the Clone Stamp tool again to add the biscuit texture to the center of the chocolate piece. Set the layer Blending Mode to Linear Light, and the Opacity to 50%. Go back to the photo and select an area of caramel with the Clone Stamp. Paint in some caramel texture on a layer above the biscuit.

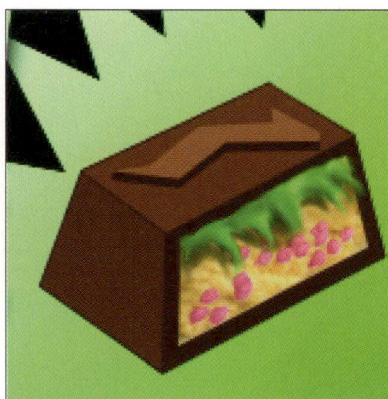
HOW SPECIAL IS SPECIAL?



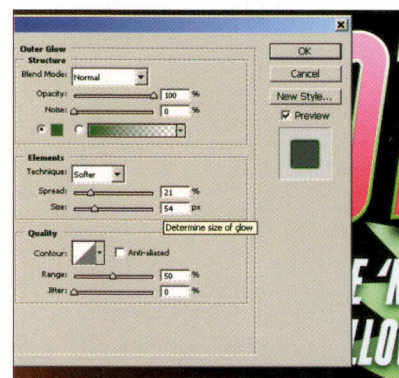
While researching for this project, you'll probably notice how many of the established brands are constantly offering 'special edition' versions of its products, rather than launching new products in themselves. As we mentioned at the beginning, the big brands make it hard for any newcomers to make an impression on the market. The trend for 'special edition' variations of well-known products tends to cover up this fact, making it seem like there's more choice than there really is. Again, for you the designer it means you've got to try extra hard to catch the consumer's attention in the first place!



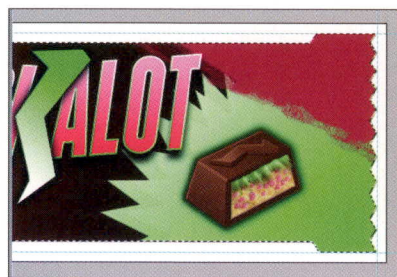
20 A GREEN DAY: To shape the caramel, we're going to need to swap between the Eraser, Smudge, Dodge, Burn and Blur tools. Use the Smudge tool to stretch out the caramel, the Burn tool to add shadows, the Dodge tool to add highlights, and the Blur and Eraser tools to soften the effects. Apply a Color Overlay. Use a bright green, but set the Opacity to 50%, and the Blend Mode to Color.



21 MARSHMALLOW PIECES: Add a shadow layer beneath the caramel, using a low opacity on the layer to add depth. Open the file called 'sweets.psd' and copy and paste them on top of the biscuit layer. Go to Edit> Transform>Distort, and scale them onto the chocolate piece in perspective. Apply a Color Overlay, with a strong pink at 100% Opacity, with the Blend Mode as Soft Light.



22 A LITTLE FLAT: The basics of the chocolate piece are all there, but it hasn't got much depth. Add Gradient Overlays to the sides, and draw in new shapes with the Pen tools to accentuate highlights and shadows. Add a wide dark green Stroke to the bottom layer and a broad green Outer Glow too. Now we need to announce that it's a new product. Select the main bar shape and create a Marquee from the Paths tab as before.



23 SOMETHING NEW: Make sure you're on a new layer, and then select the Brush tool. Change the brush set to Dry Media Brushes and select the Soft Oil Pastel, which is the fourth option down. Paint a triangle shape to the top right of the bar. Vary the brush size and Opacity along the inner edge of the triangle so you get a nicely textured edge.



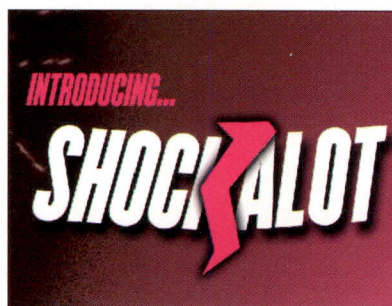
24 BACK TO THE RECTANGLE: Add the text over the triangle and rotate it accordingly. Organise all the elements of the bar into groups for the logo, background and foreground elements, and put them all within one main group. Now drag this onto the main canvas. Scale it down to 75% of its size.



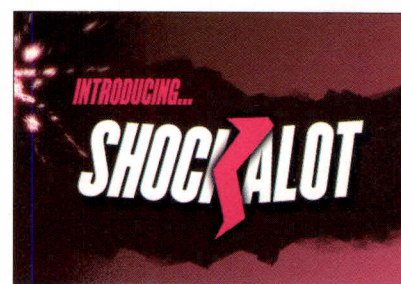
25 SHADOWS AND FOG: Set up a new layer called 'shadows' above the bar group, and use a combination of soft round brushes and erasers to render the shadows on the packaging. Use the Smudge tool to bring out a few creases, and the Blur tool to soften the marks you're making. Try and keep the shadows soft so that the bar looks rounded. Only use black and fade the layer Opacity.



26 HIGHLIGHTS BRING LIFE: On a 'highlights' layer do the same thing, this time with white. Start with large soft brushes with a faint opacity, and then work over the top where you want to bring out the highlights. Again, use the Smudge tool to define a few of the creases, and the Blur tool to soften it all. Make sure you don't go right to the edges.

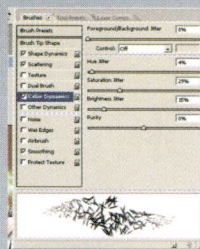


27 LOGO VARIATION: Open the bar layer group and find the logo sub-group. Duplicate this group, and drag it to the top of the layers. Keep the drop-shadow, but turn off the stroke and gradient styles. Colour the lightning bolt in pink instead. Add some text to the top left of the logo, using the strong pink again.

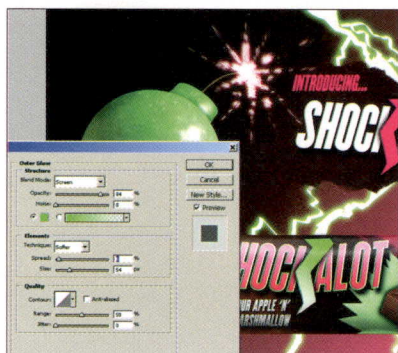


28 FRAME THE LOGO: At the moment the logo is a little isolated. Select the Brush tool, and the same Soft Oil Pastel from before. Set the Size to around 100 now, and paint a broad uneven strip behind the logo, on a layer above the large circle we added earlier. Use an eraser with the same brush (and the Opacity at 50%), to add texture to the edge.

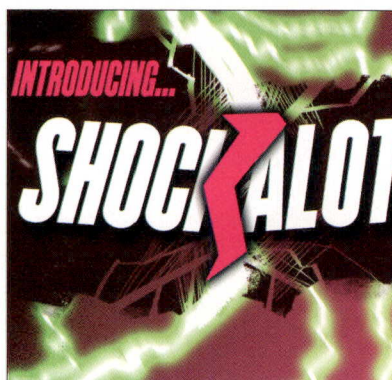
CONTROL YOUR BRUSH ACTION



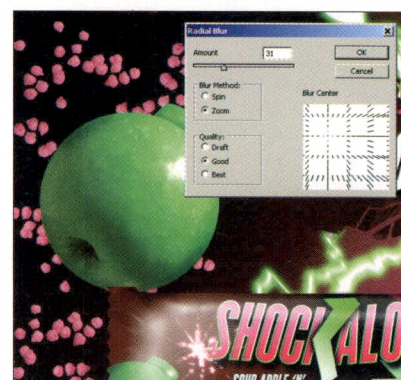
We've used the Brushes palette a few times in this tutorial to add some texture and depth to our branding exercise. But there's so much you can do with it, and we recommend you spend more time trying it out. We've shown how you can scatter the strokes and control the variability of the angle, but there's a lot more you can do. Things really become fun when you start adjusting the colour settings too. Every time you make a mark, the hue, saturation or brightness can vary, for example. And they can vary as little, or as much as you like. It's great for building up textured images, and plenty more once you start to play around.



29 LIGHTNING STRIKE: Create a new layer behind the one you've just worked on, calling it 'lightning'. Change the brush set to Calligraphic Brushes. Using various brush sizes, paint in some edgy lightning. Make sure that the main beam strikes through both the 'K' of the main logo, and the one on the bar logo. Add a bright green layer glow with the Screen blend mode, with a 6% Spread and 54px Size.



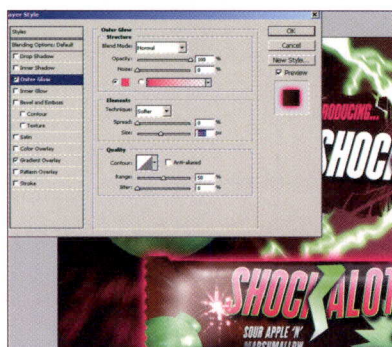
30 IT'S ALL A BLUR: Go to Filter>Blur>Motion Blur. Set the Angle to -62°, the Distance to 44, and then press OK. When it's rendered, go to Edit>Fade Motion Blur, drag the slider down to 70%, and hit OK. Take an eraser to the logo frame on the layer above, cutting into it as if cracks are spreading from the lightning bolt. Add cross-hatching with a smaller eraser.



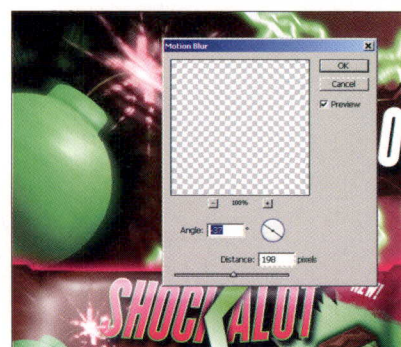
31 SWEET SENSATION: Go back to the 'sweets.psd' file and copy and paste the sweets behind the apple on the left-hand side. Copy the layer a few times, rotating the sweets into a different position each time. Merge these layers into one, and go to Blur>Radial Blur. Set the Amount to 31, the Blur Method to Zoom, and align to center roughly to the center of the apple. Press OK.



32 BUILD WITH SUBTLETY: Once the blur has rendered, go to Edit>Fade Radial Blur, and set the Opacity down to 90%. Apply a Gradient Overlay to the layer that fades vertically from green into pink, and set the Layer Opacity to 30%. Duplicate the layer twice, moving the contents a few pixels to the right each time, to get an overlap. Duplicate the layer again and flip it horizontally so the effect continues on the other side.

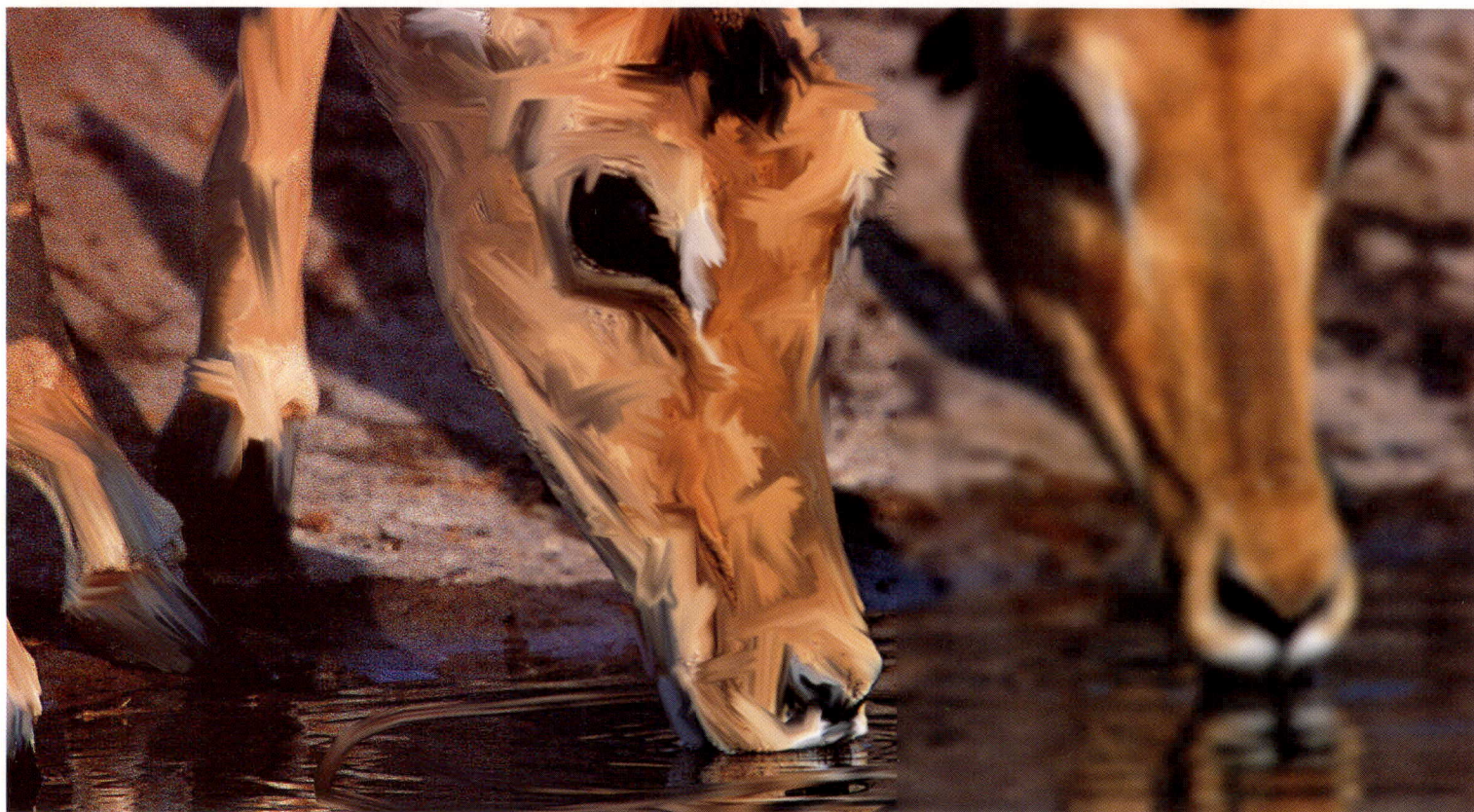


33 DARK CIRCLES: Make the 'apple' group visible once again, and duplicate the main layer with the apple on it. Now put it at the bottom of the group, and apply an Outer Glow to the layer. Set the Blend Mode to Dissolve, and give it 100% Opacity. Set the Spread to 39% and the Size to 250px. Open the bar group and apply a strong pink Outer Glow to the bottom layer.



34 TASTY TREAT: For a final touch, add a motion blur to the apple by duplicating the group, merging it, and going to Filter>Blur>Motion Blur. Set the Angle to -37% and the Distance to 200 pixels. Move the blur up so that it only appears on the top left side of the apple, and use a large soft Eraser to rub out the rest of the blur. Have a chocolate break, and then why not start on your own design?

BEN HARVELL took a brief sabbatical from the world of *Digital Creative Arts* to concentrate on creating great tunes for *Digital Music Maker*. Now he's back with a vengeance and keener than ever to spread his knowledge of all things creative.



Tool Guide: Blur, Smudge and Sharpen tools

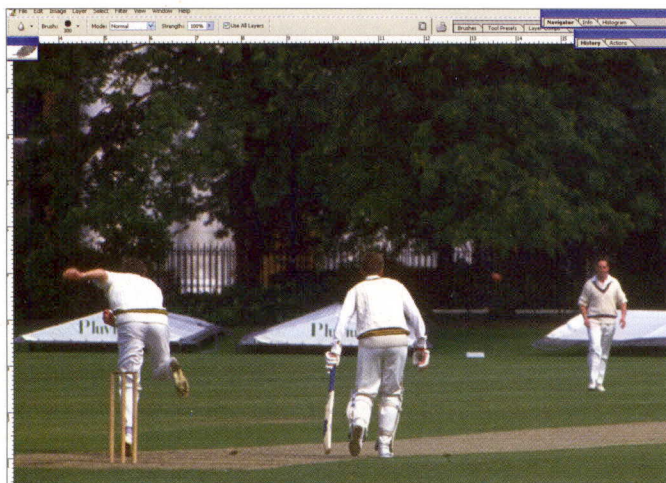
WE'VE GOT THREE FAB TOOLS FOR YOU TO MASTER THIS ISSUE. THEY MAY SOUND PURELY PRACTICAL, BUT THEIR ARTISTIC USES WILL ASTONISH

With three of the most useful Photoshop tools nestling together on one button, we thought it unfair to brush through their collective uses too quickly, so this issue we've given the tool guide a little more room to breathe. As you can see, it's the turn of the Blur, Sharpen and Smudge tools, and we think the variety of uses they have will amaze you!

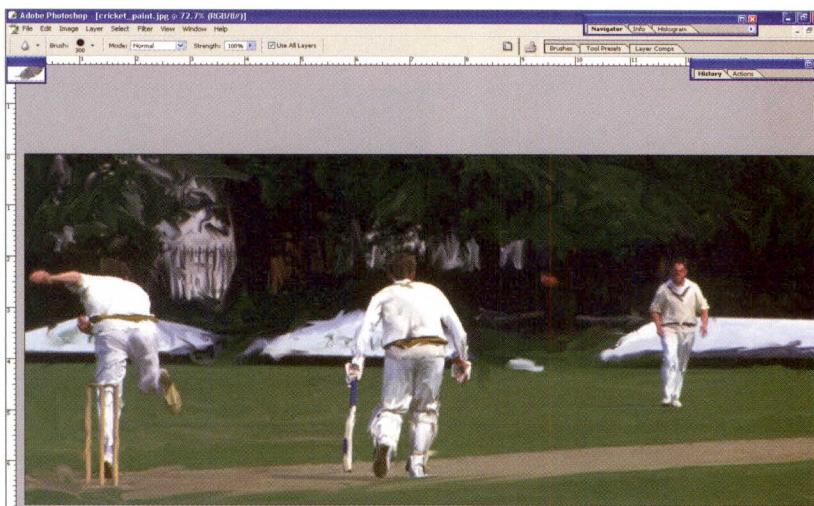
Firstly, the Blur tool is great for clearing up blemishes on images, merging things together and performing little touch-up jobs to your photos or artwork. Doing the

opposite job, the Sharpen tool can be used to bring out detail where there is too much blurring, and can also serve to accentuate areas that are not necessarily at the forefront of your image. The Smudge tool is often thought of as a fun (even lightweight) tool, but the truth is that it can be really helpful in blending things together, as well as being able to create some interesting painting effects, as we'll demonstrate over the following pages.

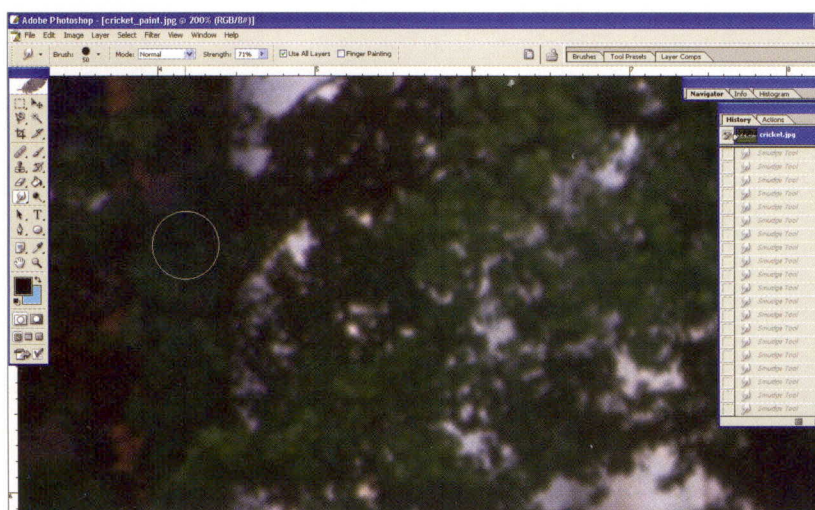
The image above shows the impact of all three tools (from left to right you can see the Sharpen, the Smudge and the Blur tools in action) as well as areas of the image that remain untouched. So without further ado, let's move onwards and upwards and get these three great tools working for you.



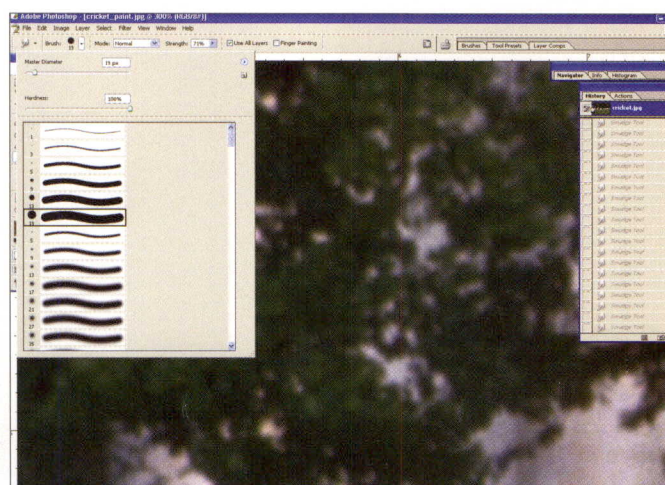
01 START FROM SCRATCH: Here is our original image, a basic shot of a cricket match with a simple range of predominantly green, black and white. We will use the Smudge tool to make it look a little like an oil painting. A lot of experimentation is going to be required as you learn how to use the tool.



02 END PRODUCT: This is the image after we have smudged the colours to create the painted look. By using a variety of tips we'll mention below, the overall image looks more artistic and certainly more interesting than before. Keep this result in mind as you work.



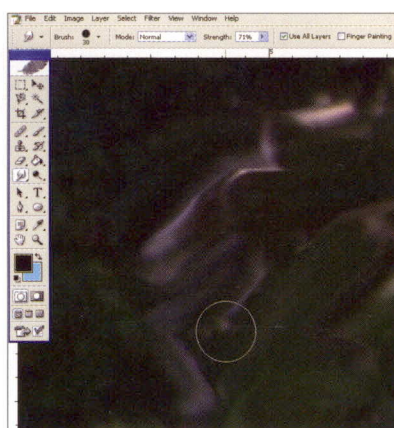
03 IN THE BACKGROUND: Start with the background to build up your confidence. You'll need to get in close to the image, so use the Zoom tool for this.



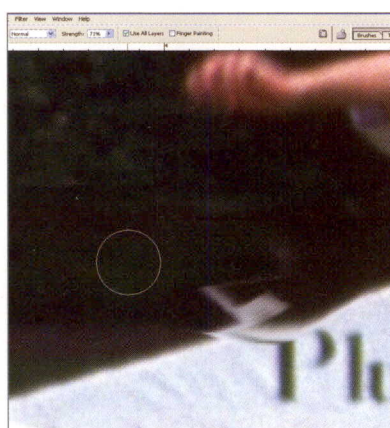
04 SMUDGE SETTINGS: Now have a look at the Options bar, and choose a fairly large brush size with a narrowing shape. Set the Smudge strength to around 70% for best results.

THE RIGHT IMPRESSION

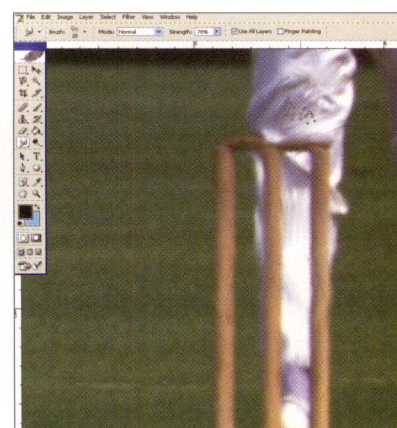
If you want to achieve the perfect look when converting a digital image into a painting style, it is a good idea to study up on the various genres of traditional painting to clarify the style you want. When you have chosen a specific look, you'll see that the type of brushes and strength settings you choose will be critical.



05 DAB AND DRAG: With the Smudge tool selected, gently dab the tree line and slowly drag a few centimetres across. Work out from this area in the same way, using different directions and lengths of stroke.



06 FINE-TUNING: You will notice that occasionally too much colour is dragged across the image. You can either undo when this happens or gently drag the tool back in the opposite direction to create a nice effect.



07 HUMAN TOUCH: The detail on the people and stumps requires a hard-edged brush, much smaller than before. Use this to follow creases on clothing and to make sure brush strokes are in random directions.

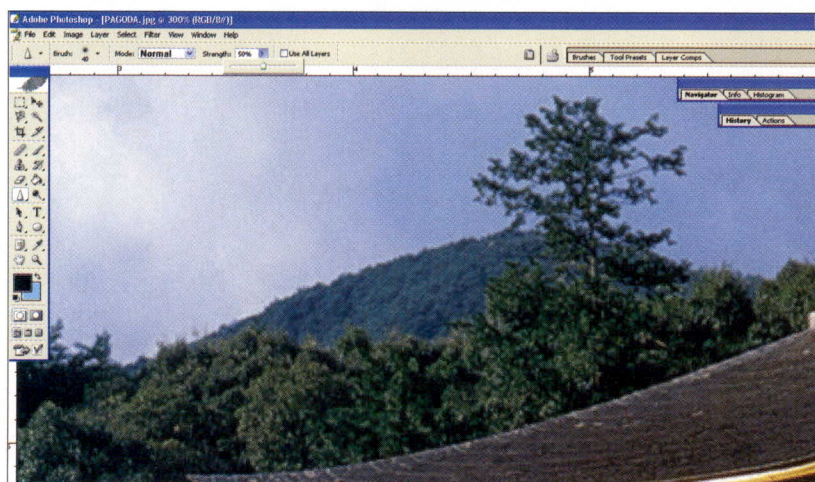
USING THE SHARPEN TOOL



01 PAGODA PROBLEMS: Here we have a lovely image of a Pagoda, but due to the sunlight and the distance between camera and subject, a lot of the definition has been lost, especially from the roof tiles.



02 SHARPENED UP: By using the Sharpen tool, you can see we have brought out the details in the roofing, as well as some other elements that were previously out of focus.



03 PROBLEM AREAS: To start with, look at the overall image and determine what needs to be altered and what should be left alone. Starting with the left of the roof, you can zoom right in and then set the Sharpen tool to 50% strength.



04 SHARP SWEEPING: Focusing too heavily on one area will produce an over-sharpened and unreal look. To avoid this, sweep the Sharpen brush gently over the areas to be sharpened and repeat over areas that need special attention.

EXTRA TWEAKS

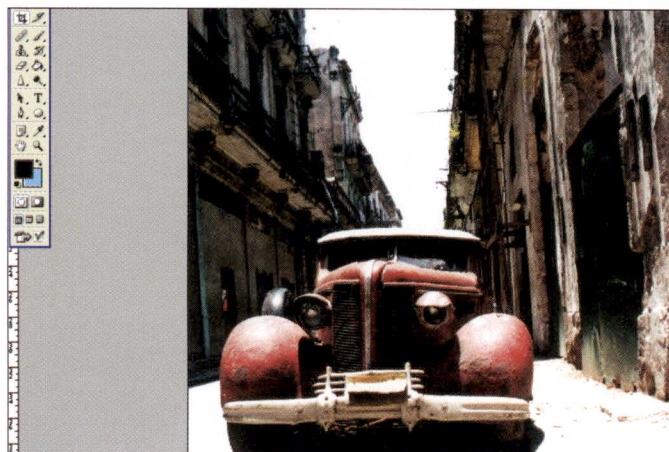
The Sharpen tool isn't the only way to correct those photographic flaws. Before starting work on a digital image, try using the Auto-Levels function on the Adjustments menu to correct the colours in your picture. The Unsharp Mask is also handy when the Sharpen tool just won't cut it.



05 EDGE WORK: The edges don't always get touched in the sweeps across the roof, so, using a smaller brush, quickly run the Sharpen tool down the corners and bottoms of the roofing to include it in the sharpening.



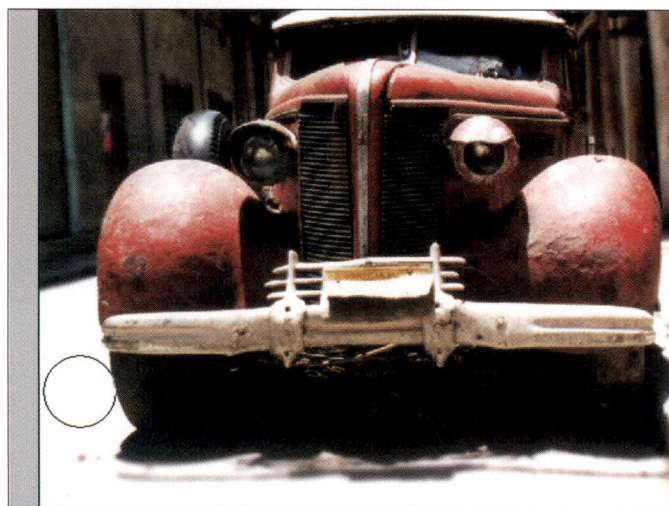
06 ALL OVER JOB: In order that the roof doesn't stand out as being the only clarified part of the building, we made a few sweeps of the lower floors and balconies to give them the same sharpness and to complement the overall image.



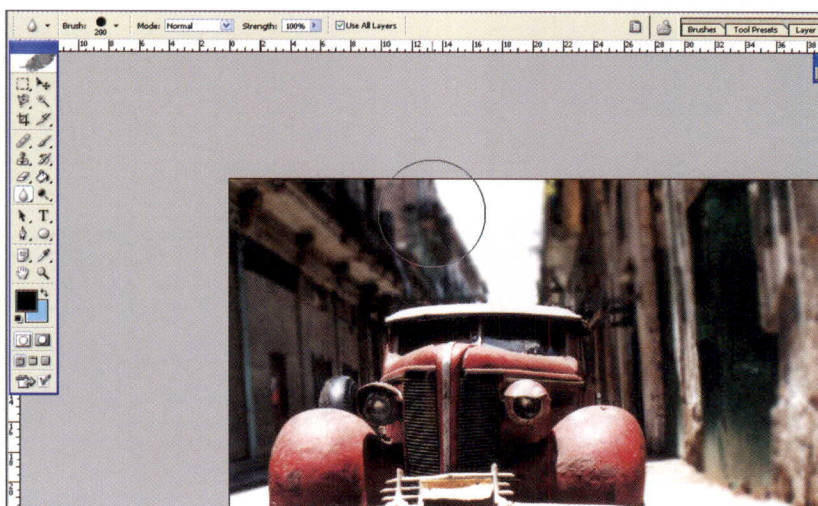
01 STREET CAR: This pretty image is very crisp and has detailed elements in both the background and the foreground. The lighting is also striking and provides great glints off the metal. But it still could be improved.



02 HIGHLIGHTED VEHICLE: In the finished version, we have used the Blur tool to give a soft focus to everything except the car, making it the focal point of the image.



03 FROM THE BOTTOM TO THE TOP: Starting below the wheels, you can use a wide Blur tool to soften the road and the walls at the side of the image. Use a wider brush for the sky and buildings above the car.



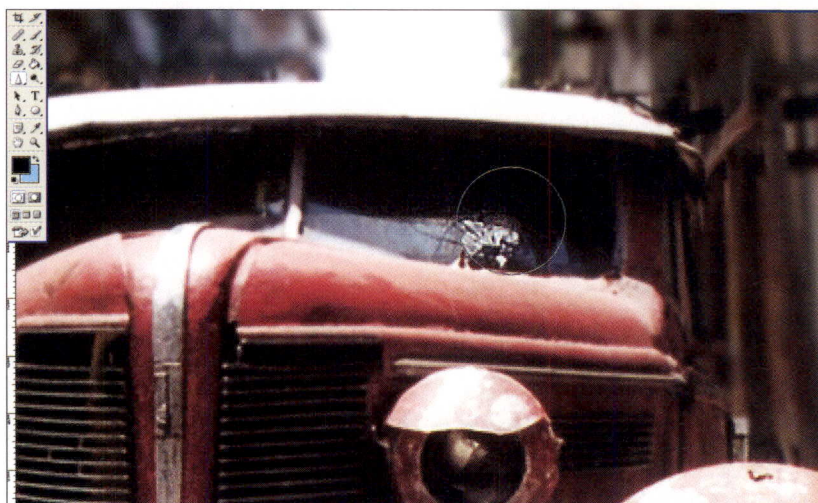
04 WIDE RE-RUN: Still using the wide brush, go back over the walls to make them appear even softer, adding more presence to the car. It's also worth redoing the sky at this point.

GETTING EDGY

When it comes to the Blur tool, the brush type and - more importantly - the brush edges are key to seamless blurring. For blurring more detailed (or smaller) areas, a hard edged brush will suit, whereas covering wide areas is often better suited to a feathered edge.



05 SHARPENING UP: With the Sharpening tool selected, add a few strokes across the lit areas on the metal. By doing this you'll add to the focus on the car and improve its clarity at the same time.



06 WINDSCREEN WOES: The windscreen has an interesting crack in the front, which we'll choose to highlight with the Sharpen tool. Also do the same for some of the grill if you want to use that to give the image punchier definition.

CHARLENE CHUA is an illustrator and designer from Singapore, who mainly works in Illustrator. When not working, she hangs out with her fiancé and cooks up strange tales about make-believe rabbits. Try www.charlenechua.com to find out more.



Design your own dragon

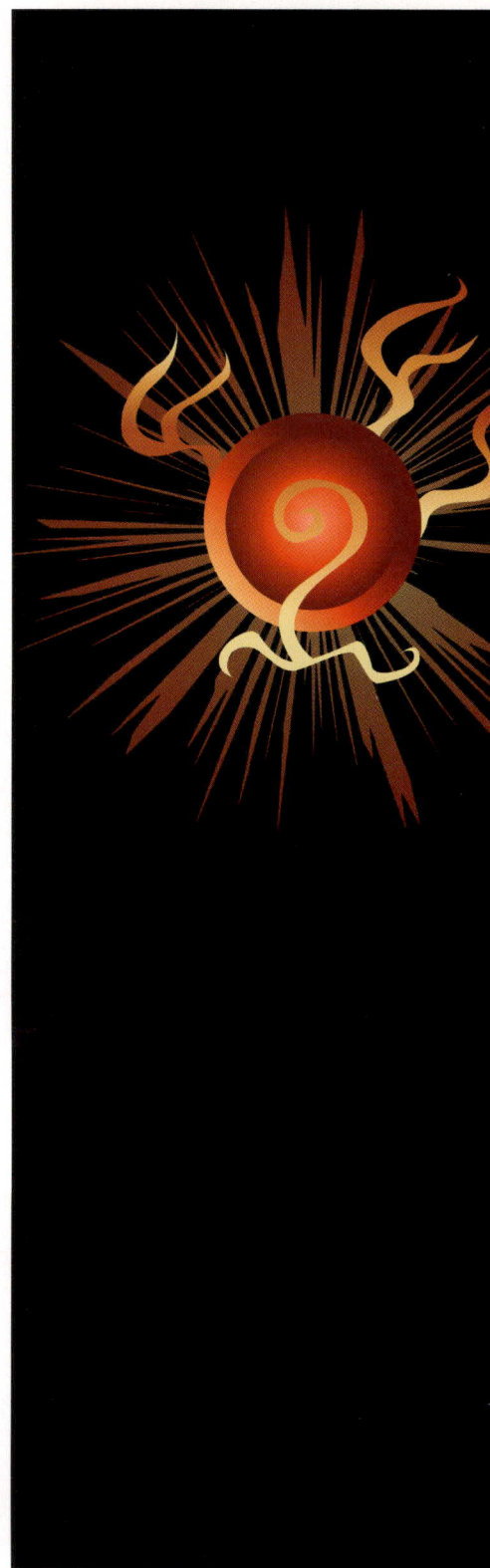
GLAMOUROUS AND DANGEROUS, THE DRAGON HAS LONG BEEN POPULAR IN ORIENTAL ILLUSTRATION. GET READY TO BREATHE FIRE, AS YOU CREATE YOUR OWN

Dragons have been a favourite subject of artists for many years. Often used as a symbol of power, they have commanded awe and respect from people around the world. However, while dragons in the West have developed a rather nasty reputation, the dragons of the East and the Orient have maintained a dignified position as wise, benevolent creatures, that are often associated with moments of significance or mysticism. In China, dragons were thought to be responsible for the weather, and were a favourite symbol of the Emperor. They were often depicted in bright hues of gold, ultramarine, crimson and jade, and were often posed to seem quite lively and energetic. Unlike the Western dragon (that was reptilian), the Chinese dragon was serpentine, flew without wings, and was made up of the body parts of several animals, including the carp, eagle, snake and stag. All of which makes it an interesting illustration topic.

The way the classic Chinese dragon mashes all these elements together elegantly is rather like this tutorial in fact, because we are going to piece it together using a whole host of great Illustrator tools, techniques and tricks. To create the dragon, we'll be starting with the basic drawing tools (such as the Pen, Oval and Rectangle), but then we'll also explore more advanced techniques (Pattern Fills and Brush Strokes, for instance) to really add texture to the piece. Lastly, we will learn how to construct a unique pattern, and then use that to make a Custom Pattern brush that will be put to some serious work!

The trick - as with any other type of art - is not to just randomly use a technique or feature without thought, but to understand the strengths and appropriate situations where these tricks are at their best. Using Pattern Fills, for example, is a perfect way to quickly add texture to a large area, but it may not be the technique you want when it comes to something that requires a more individual touch, such as you'll see here with the eye of the dragon.

We're sure you just can't wait to get started, so turn to the page, boot up your computer and fire up Illustrator! Just remember to pop in the cover CD to load up the files first. You might also want to take a look at the final file before you start, just to see the end result. And if you get stuck, just take a break and come back to work later - no good work comes out of a frustrated mind! And once you've created your own dragon (and named him), make sure you put him somewhere safe. This sort of artwork is perfect for using in a bigger design project, like a calendar or a flyer perhaps. As well as learning about layout, it'll force you to take extra care with every single element that makes up your dragon in the first place!





ON THE CD

Dragon-start.ai
Dragon-done.ai
Dragon-base.jpg

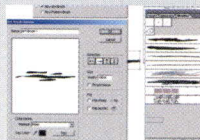
BRUSH UP ON YOUR BRUSHES



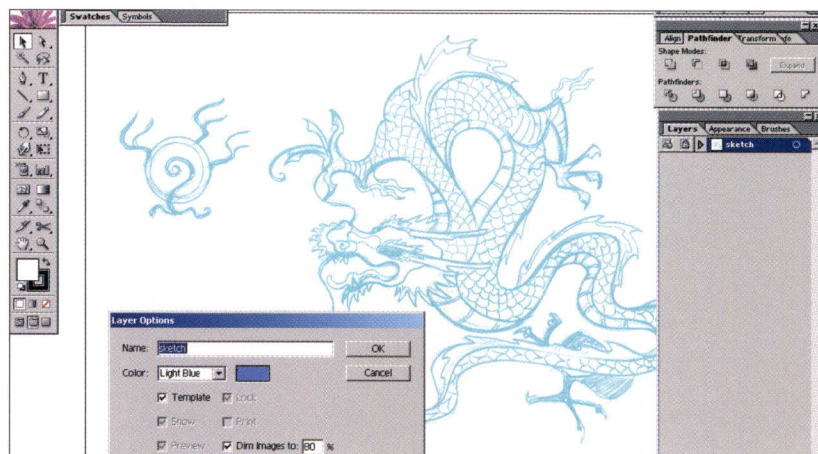
The Beard outline brush (which is used extensively here), is a custom-made Art brush. You can create four different types of brushes: Calligraphic, Art, Scatter and Pattern. Calligraphic brushes create calligraphic-like strokes. Scatter brushes duplicate and repeat artwork along a path. Art brushes stretch artwork evenly along the length of a path, while Pattern brushes tile artwork along a



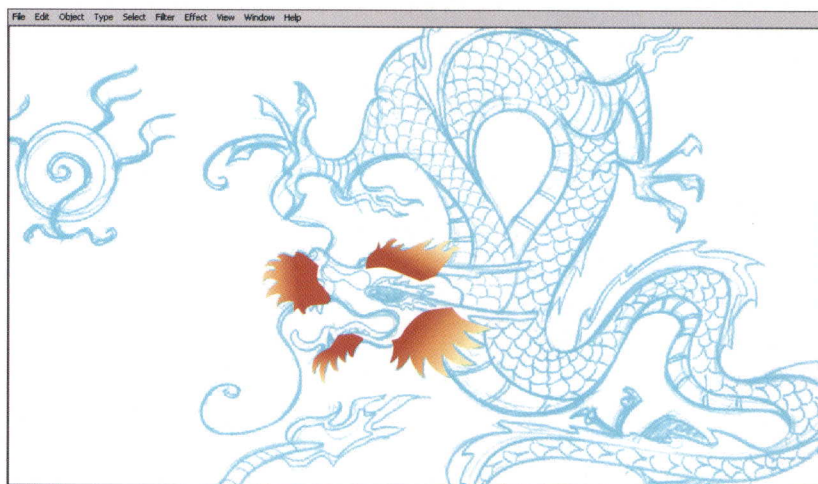
path. Art brushes can contain more than one shape, but all shapes have to be simple objects. Shapes with things like gradient fills, meshes or blends cannot be made into Art brushes. Select all objects when ready, and click on New Brush in the Brushes palette. Creating a new brush will generate the New Brush pop-up. Select New Art Brush and press OK. You'll now get the



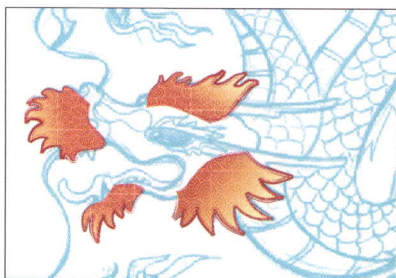
Art Brush Options box, where you can set a name for your brush and change its direction, size and colour.



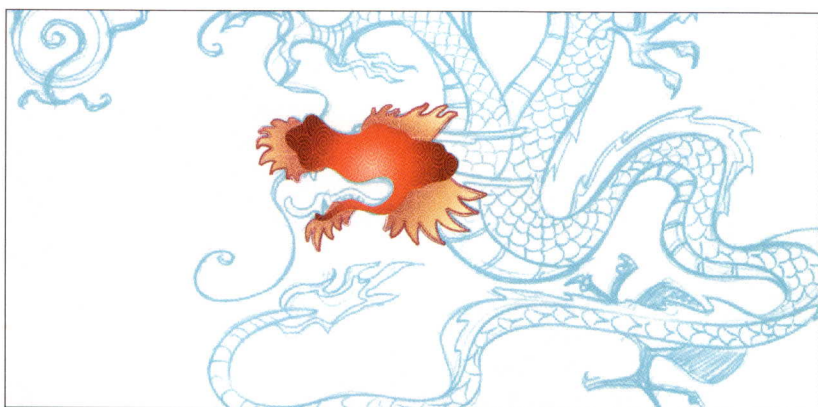
01 IMPORT SKETCH: To begin the tutorial, open the file 'dragon-start.ai' from the cover CD. Import the dragon sketch by pressing File>Place>dragon-base.jpg'. Double-click the layer and rename it 'SKETCH'. With this pop-up open you should also check Template, and set Dim Images to 80%. This will make the layer a template layer that will not print nor be exported later.



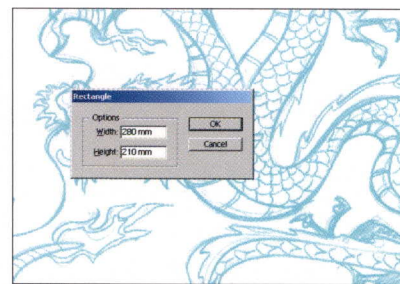
03 BEGIN WITH THE BEARD: Obviously you can start with any part of the dragon, but it's best to try and figure what's at the bottom and work your way up from there. So, create a new layer and name it Beard. With the Pen tool, trace out the beard shapes around the dragon's head. In the Gradient palette, create and save a gold-coloured swatch (or use the pre-made Gold swatch). Apply this to the beard.



05 OUTLINE WITH EASE: The edges of the beard can be softened with the aid of a brushstroke effect. Select the original beard shapes, and then open up the Brushes palette. Select the custom brush 'Beard outline'. In the toolbar, choose dull red for the stroke colour. You may want to adjust the brushstroke for each individual shape by selecting it and clicking on the options of the Selected Object button in the Brushes palette.



06 HEADS UP: The dragon's head might seem rather complex, but it's actually constructed from a bunch of simple steps. Start with a fresh layer; choose the Pen tool and carefully trace the outline of the dragon's head. Create and apply a brilliant red gradient to this (or use the 'Red1' gradient swatch). Duplicate this layer, and repeat the process in step 4 to apply the spiral pattern fill. Change the duplicate's Transparency to Color Dodge at 50%.



02 SET THE STAGE: Make a new layer and select the Rectangle tool. You're going to make a large black rectangle that will serve as the backdrop for the picture so click once (anywhere on the canvas) to open up the Rectangle tool options. Set it to 280mm wide and 210mm high and align the rectangle so it covers the work area. Move this layer below the Sketch layer and hide it for now.



04 ADD TEXTURE: To give the beard more texture, select all the beard shapes, Copy, and then Paste In Front (Ctrl+F). With the duplicate shapes selected, click on the Swatches palette and choose Pattern Swatches. Select the Spiral swatch to instantly apply the pattern to the shapes. Click on the Scale tool and, while holding down the tilde (~) key, drag to scale the pattern to a suitable size. Lastly, change the Transparency to Screen to get a nice glowing effect.

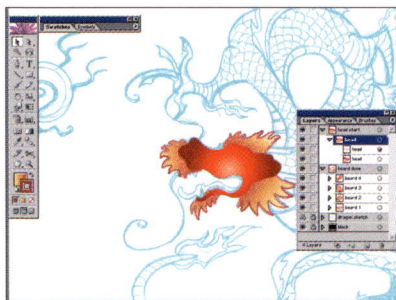
MORE ABOUT PATTERN FUN



Patterns are a great way to save time. As shown here, patterns can either be applied via a Pattern Swatch or a Pattern Brush. Pattern Swatches are found within the Swatches palette, and can be used as either a fill or stroke. Pattern Brushes can only be used on strokes. Despite having similar agendas, Pattern Swatches and Pattern Brushes produce quite different results. To understand the differences, you need to experiment as much as you can. The left-most shape



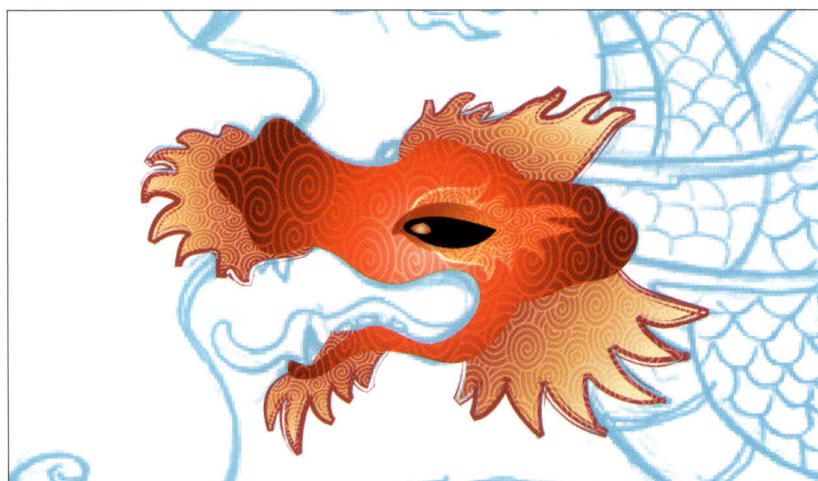
contains a Pattern Swatch for its fill. The pattern tiles its artwork within the fill area. The middle shape contains a Pattern Swatch for its stroke. The pattern here tiles the artwork within the stroke area only – the thickness of which is defined by the stroke weight. The last shape has a Pattern Brush applied to its stroke. Notice how the brush conforms to the curve of the stroke. Pattern Swatches can contain Gradient Meshes (shapes with Gradient Fills). By contrast, only simple vectors (shapes with solid fills or strokes) can be used to make your very own Pattern Brushes.



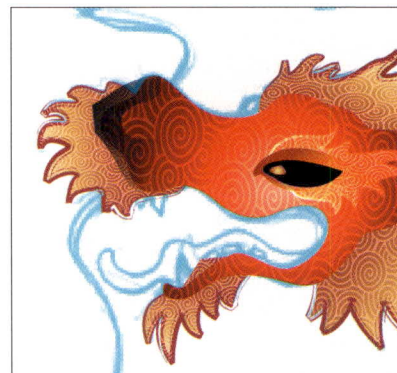
07 THE NAME GAME: Select and Group the head shapes and hide them for now. Name the sub-layers as well as the layers so you can find them easily later on. Naming sub-layers can take up more time but in the long run you'll find it's much easier to find a sub-layer named 'eye' than it is to click on 50 anonymously-named ones.



08 MAKING EYES: The dragon's eye is a delicate combination of various shapes that will be filled with Gradients and Pattern Fills, and lit with different lighting effects. Start by drawing outlines of the general eye shapes with a Pen tool. Fill the innermost portion with the Gold gradient swatch, but change it to a Radial gradient. Fill the shape behind that with a solid black.



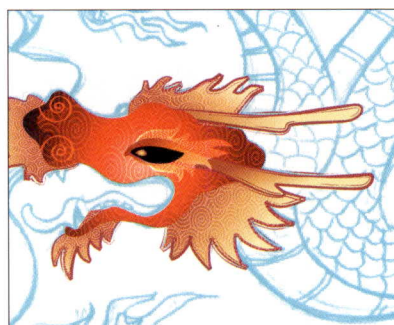
09 EYES TO THE FRONT: Apply the Gold swatch to the outer eye area and change its Lighting Mode to Multiply. Apply the same swatch to the outermost area too. Set its stroke colour to white, and change its Transparency to Overlay. Duplicate the outermost part, change its Transparency to Screen and apply the Spiral pattern fill as before. Unhide the head shapes you drew previously to check the finished eye and make adjustments.



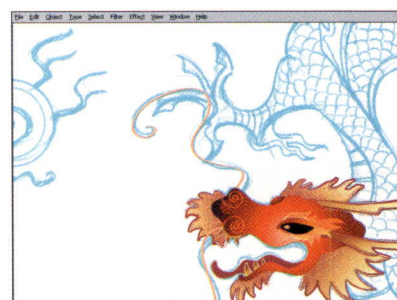
10 BE NOSEY: The dragon's head should be beginning to take shape now. Continue to bring it to life by working on its nose area. Use the Pen tool to draw an irregular shape around the curvature of the dragon's beak. Apply a White and Black gradient swatch to this, and change its Lighting Mode to Multiply. Adjust the gradient accordingly; the dragon should look like he's growing a moustache now!



11 MUZZLING THE DRAGON: Select the Spiral tool (if you can't find it, click and hold down on the Line tool). Use this to draw a couple of nostrils. Select both paths, and then apply the 1pt Oval brush to them. Change the stroke colour to orange and set the Lighting Mode to Color Dodge. Now duplicate one head outline and move it above the nose. Select the head outline duplicate, nose shadow and nostrils and choose Make Clipping Mask.

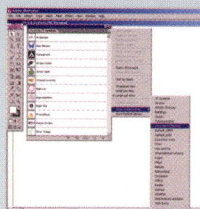


12 GET HORNY: No dragon would be complete without horns! Draw in the horn shapes (it might be helpful to hide the head) and fill them with the Gold gradient. Set the stroke colour to red and apply the Beard Outline brushstroke. Notice that one horn is behind the head, while the other joins up with the eye. Move the sub-layers up and down in the palette until they are arranged properly.

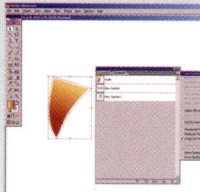


13 FINISH THE HEAD: Complete the rest of the head by adding in the little details. Add in some teeth with the pre-made Tooth symbol. Draw in a tongue and fill it with a red swatch and an orange stroke. Don't forget the whiskers – like horns, no Chinese dragon is complete without them. Lastly, add in the 'back eye' with a circle filled with the 'Red1' gradient. Unhide any hidden head sub-layers and make adjustments as you see fit.

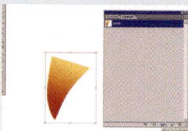
THE TOOTH OF THE MATTER



Symbols are basically pieces of artwork made with the intention of reusing them. Apart from saving time, symbols are also good for keeping filesizes down. You can also quickly select every symbol instance by picking the Select>Same>Symbol Instance command. You can either use ready-made symbols or create your own. To make the tooth



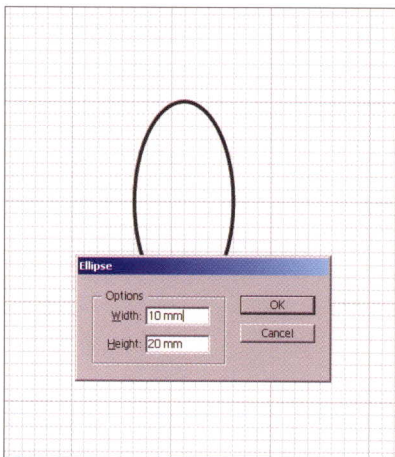
symbol, draw out one of the teeth. Fill it with a gold swatch and a white stroke. Select it and drag and drop it into the Symbols palette. To use it, click on it in the palette, and then drag and drop onto the work area. If you need to adjust, you can select it and click on the Break Link to Symbol icon in the



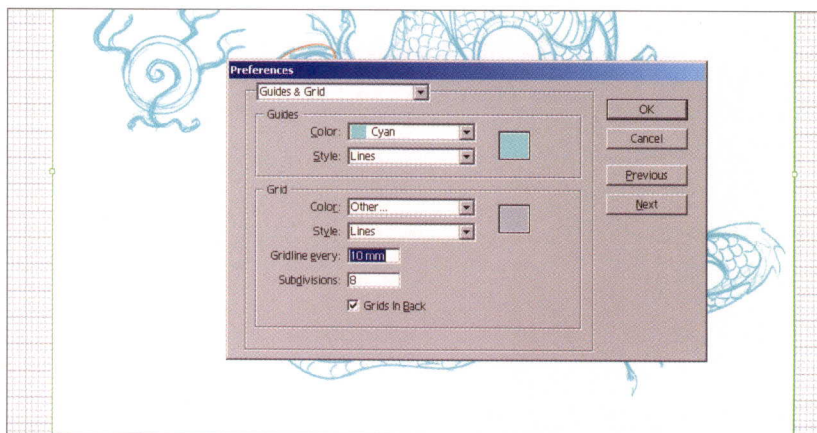
Symbols palette. Now you can adjust individual shapes; but other instances of the symbol will not be altered.



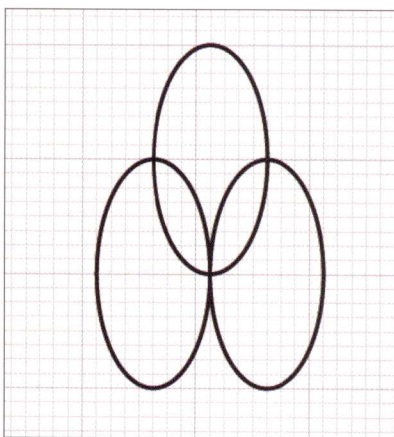
14 CREATE THE SCALES: Chinese dragons are supposed to have serpentine bodies covered with the scales of a carp. Unfortunately for us though, the scales wrap around the dragon's torso, making it impossible to simulate with a Pattern Fill. If you're a super perfectionist, you could draw out each scale individually. But if you're in a hurry, there's a shortcut you can take by making and using a Pattern Brush.



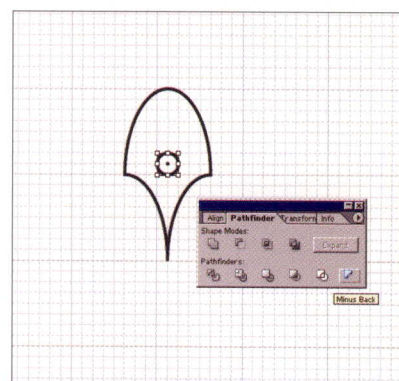
16 MAKING OVALS: Now that your grid is set up, select the Oval tool. Move your mouse to any part of the canvas that is outside the work area. Click once, and create an oval of 10mm width and 20mm height. If you turned on Snap to Grid correctly, you'll notice the oval seems to 'stick' to the grid no matter where you move it.



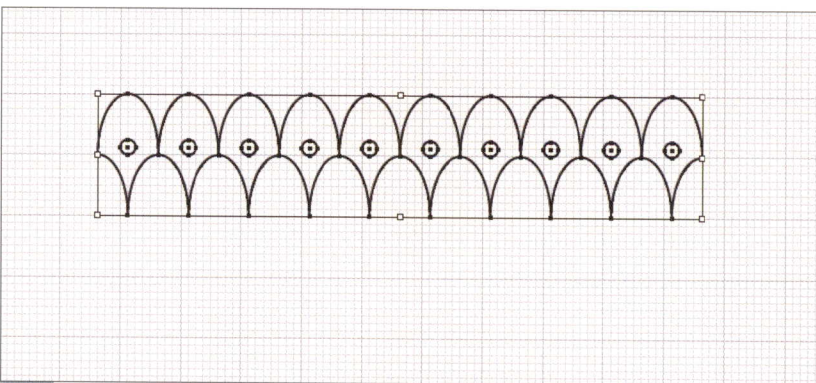
15 SET THE GRID: Pattern-making requires accuracy, and Illustrator's Grid and Snap to Grid functions are invaluable in this process. Create a new layer and turn on the grid by going to View>Show Grid. Then use Check View>Snap to Grid and make sure there is a little check beside it. Now head to Edit>Preferences>Guides & Grid. Set Gridline to 10mm and Subdivisions to 8.



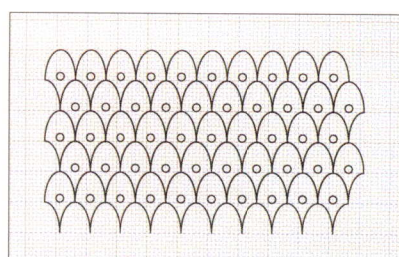
17 MORE THE MERRIER: With the oval selected, hold down the Alt key and drag diagonally downwards to duplicate the shape. Position the new oval so that its topmost tip is touching the rightmost tip of the first oval. Select the new oval and duplicate that. Use the Reflect tool to flip it vertically so that it mirrors the second oval. You should now have three ovals arranged as above.



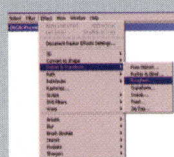
18 TRIM THE FAT: Now select the first oval you drew. Move it above the other two by choosing Object>Arrange>Bring to Front. Select all three ovals and, in the Pathfinder palette, click on Minus Back. You're now left with what looks like the original oval minus two large chunks on its lower sides. Draw a small circle, move it to the centre and Group the two shapes together.



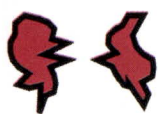
19 DUPLICATE AWAY: Hold down the Alt key, and click and drag right through eight of the little grid squares. Don't you just love Snap to Grid now? Your duplicate shape should start exactly where the original shape ends on the right. Now enjoy the beauty of automation - press Ctrl & D to repeat the duplicating process. Repeat until you've created 10 scale shapes, and then group them all together.



20 MORE DUPLICATES: Select the entire group, hold down the Alt key and drag down and right. If you're having a tough time duplicating things this way, you can also select the object you want to duplicate and click on Duplicate Object in the Layers palette, or select Edit>Copy, and then Edit>Paste in Front or Edit>Paste in Back. Continue duplicating scales until you've got between four and six rows of scales.

GETTING IT
ROUGH ENOUGH

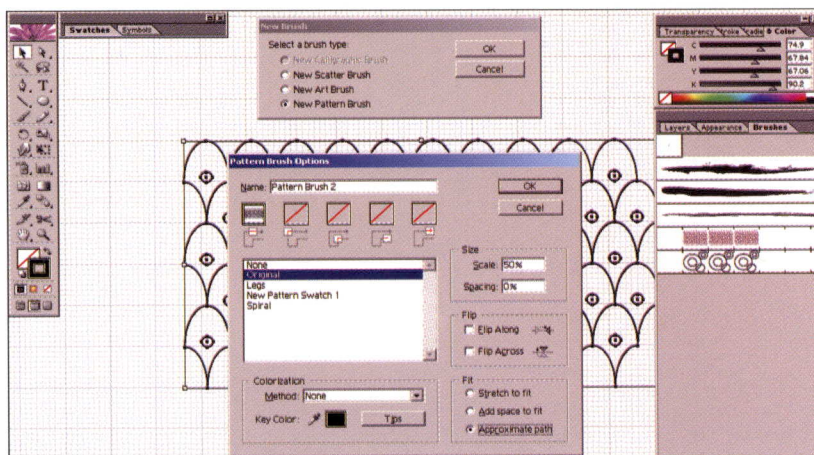
The Adobe folks understand that sometimes you just need that little extra to spice up your illustration. Hence, the whole bunch of neat effects and filters Illustrator offers. All filters can be found under the Filter menu, while all effects reside under the aptly named Effects tab. At first glance, it would seem that the Filter and Effects menus contain the same items. The difference lies in



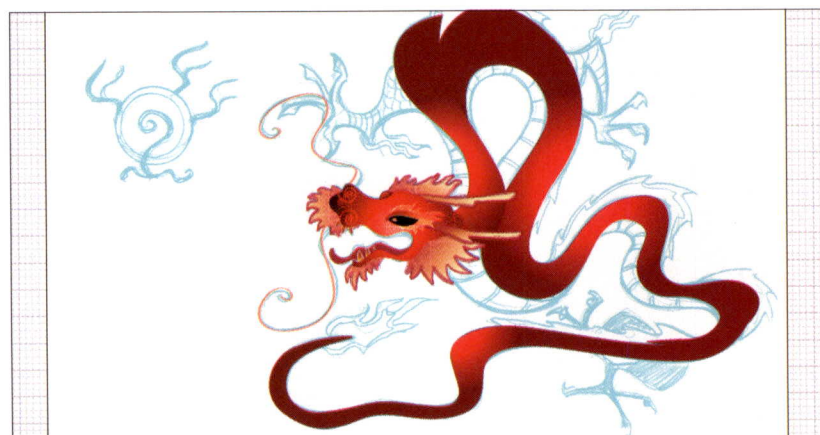
how the two work when applied. Take a look at the two ovals above. The one on the left has had a Roughen filter applied to it; the one on the right has had a Roughen effect applied. Considering they both have the same Roughen settings, you can already see that filters distort things differently from effects. By selecting the paths,



the differences become apparent. The filter has distorted the left oval into a new shape, while the effect retains the oval but 'fools' it into showing a different contour. It is vital to learn which is best to use in various situations.



21 MAKING THE PATTERN BRUSH: Phew, that was a lot of duplicating! Select the layer containing the scales to automatically select all the shapes within. Choose a dark brown for the stroke colour. With all the scales still selected, drag and drop the entire bunch into the Brush palette. Choose New Pattern Brush, change Scale to 50% and change Fit to Approximate Path. Click OK, and give yourself a pat on the back - you've just made a Pattern Brush!



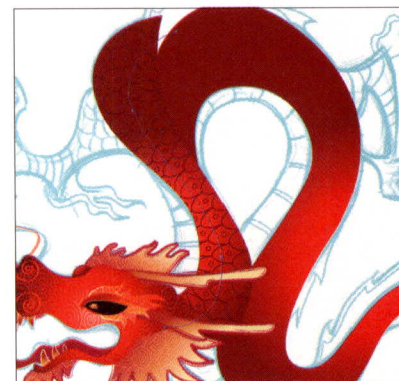
23 SNIP AND CLIP: You should now have three body shapes for the dragon. These probably overlap at the edges, so select all three shapes and click Trim in the Pathfinder palette. Delete any unnecessary shapes created. Select the body shapes and apply the 'Red1' gradient to them. Adjust the gradient, and then duplicate the set with Copy followed by Paste in Front.



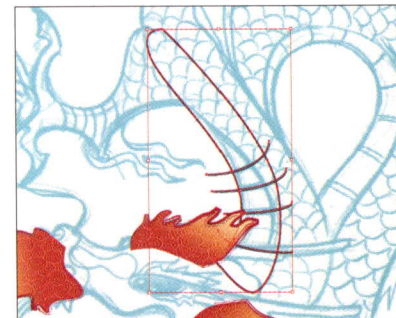
25 POMPOUS PATTERNING: Apply the scales to the body and tail in the same manner as before. Due to the complexity of the brush, you may find that it distorts around tight corners. You can fix problem bits by relaxing the contour of the curve. Use the Direct Selection tool or Lasso to select individual anchor points and adjust its direction lines. When you're done, change the Lighting mode of the scales to Color Dodge.



22 ADDING BODY: Since your Pattern Brush is all good and ready to go, it's time to start constructing the dragon's body. Looking at the sketch, you can see that the torso can be divided up into three main sections - the neck, body and tail. So create a new layer, whip out the trusty Pen tool and trace out those areas first.

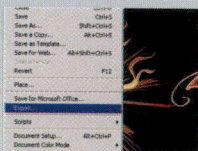


24 SLIP SOME SCALES: Draw an 'S' shaped line above the shape that makes up the dragon's neck. Now, in the Brushes palette, click on the Scale Pattern brush. Move the line below the duplicate neck. Select them both and press Make Clipping Mask.

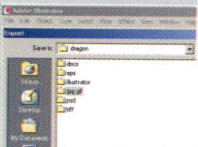


26 BELLY OF THE BEAST: Now that the top part of the dragon is complete, it's time to move on to its underside. Hide the body and head layers. Create a new layer below the body layer. Trace out the belly portion on the dragon's neck. Remember where the Spiral tool was? Go there and select the segment lines on the belly. Make sure the lines stretch right over the belly shape.

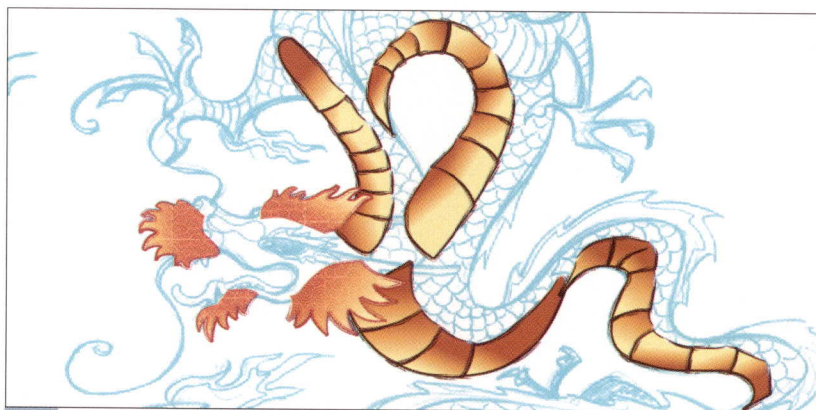
GET OUT OF IT



Artwork created in Illustrator is rarely used 'as is'. While programs such as InDesign are capable of using the artwork directly, other applications, such as Quark or Flash, may not be able to use it unless it has been first exported into a readable format. You can export your artwork in a variety of formats from Illustrator. If your artwork is intended for print, the best



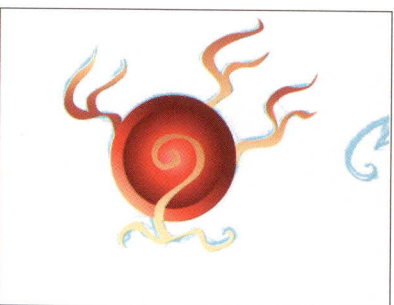
formats for export would be TIFF (.tif) or EPS (.eps). If you are going to use it on a website, you should export artwork as a JPEG (.jpg) or GIF (.gif). Export artwork by clicking on File>Export and choosing the file type you want. You can choose to work in RGB or CMYK in Illustrator. Typically, CMYK is used if your artwork is intended for print, while RGB is used for web-based artwork. However some filters and effects don't work well (or at all) in CMYK mode. Under such circumstances, it is possible to work in RGB, then later convert the file to CMYK if necessary.



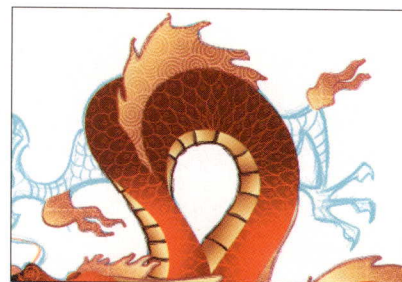
27 DIVIDE AND CONQUER: The dragon's underside is actually made up of smaller segments that are joined together. Select the belly shape and all the lines you drew with the Arc tool. In the Pathfinder palette, click on Divide. This gives you instant segments. Apply the Gold swatch to each segment individually, adjusting it as you go. Give each segment a red stroke and then apply the Beard Outline brush. Repeat this process for the other belly bits.



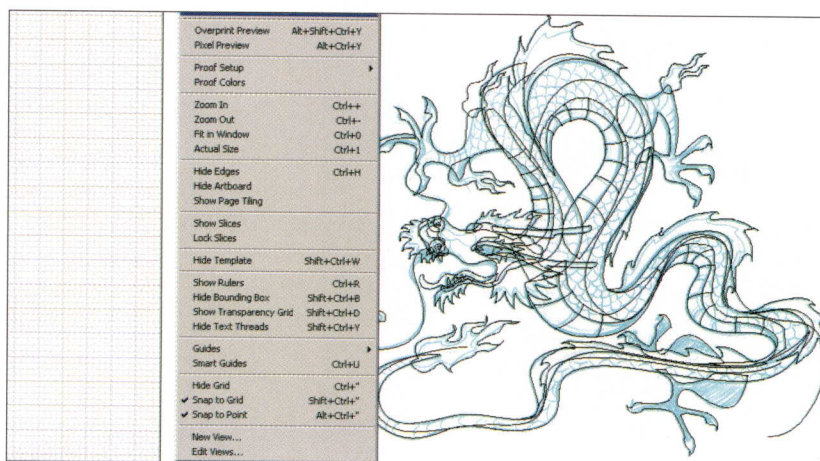
29 FINISH UP: When you're done making adjustments to the fins, complete the dragon by adding in its legs. Draw in the legs and fill them with the custom Legs Pattern swatch. Notice the contrast between this pattern and the scales. Glad you made them now? Add an orange stroke and a Brush Outline to the legs. There you go, the dragon is done!



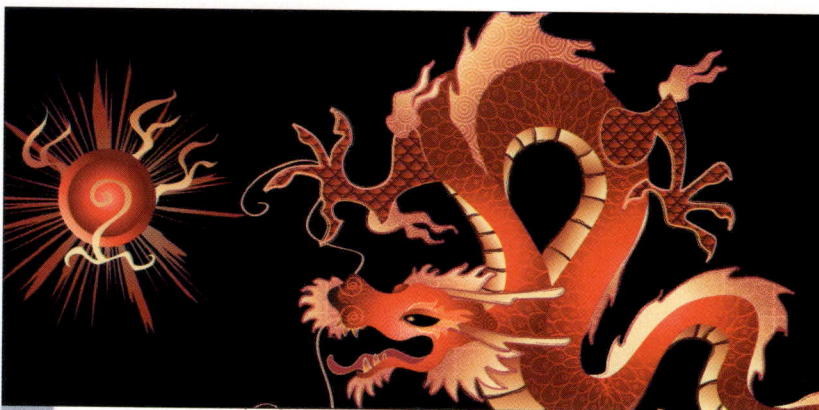
31 FLAMING PEARL: After the dragon, this should be a synch. Choose the Circle tool from the toolbar and draw a circle around the pearl. Duplicate this, and then double-click the Scale tool. In Scale options, choose 80%. Now draw in the little flame bits with a pen. Fill in the circle bits with red gradients, and use the Gold gradient swatch for the flaming bits.



28 WORKING ACROSS LAYERS: Now for the fins on the dragon's back. Make a new layer named Fins, and then draw out the fin shapes and use the process used mentioned in steps 3 and 4 to jazz them up. Unhide all layers. You'll notice that some fins need to go on other layers in order to look okay. To do this, select a fin and, in the Layers palette, drag its sub-layer out of the Fins and drop it into the appropriate layer.



30 HIDE YOUR TREASURES: With the dragon done, all that's left is the pearl. By now, your illustration should be pretty complex and you may find that Illustrator is getting sort of sluggish due to the weight of the artwork. You can get round this by temporarily hiding whatever layers you don't need, or by working in Outline mode. For now, hide all the layers with dragon artwork, and create a new layer for the pearl.



32 ROUGHEN AND FINISH: The pearl looks good but not enticing enough for our dragon. To spice it up, create another circle and fill it with a red gradient. Move it behind the other pearl sub-layers. Go up to Effect>Distort and Transform>Roughen. Set the Size to 68 and Detail to 52 to transform your circle into a starburst. Unhide all layers and you've finished. Of course you can now add your own tweaks, as well as get thinking about where to use your beautiful dragon.

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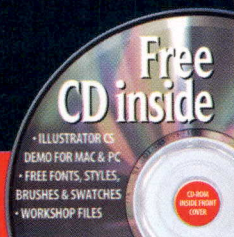
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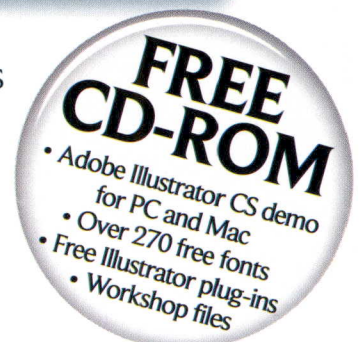


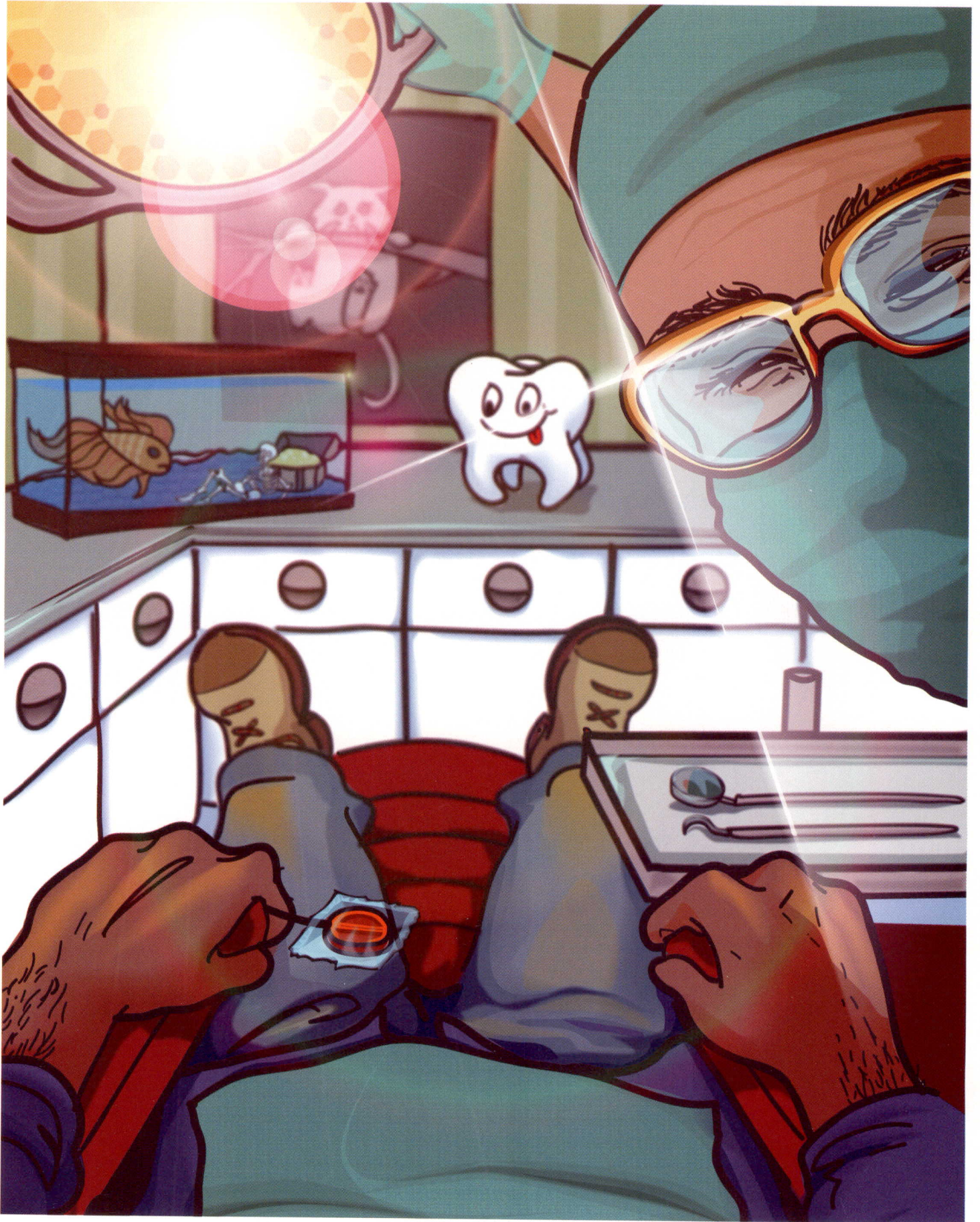
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TIFFANY LARSEN has been using a computer as a drawing tool for 20 years. She's progressed from an 11-year-old nerd making raster art into a professional illustrator who would probably marry a vector if they asked nicely. See www.uberpop.com for more.



Rough up your Illustrator artwork

EVER CREATE A BEAUTIFUL PIECE IN PHOTOSHOP THAT YOU THEN WANTED TO SCALE, BUT COULDN'T BECAUSE IT RUINED THE RESOLUTION? LEARN A FEW TRICKS FOR MAKING VECTOR IMAGES LOOK RASTER, AND YOU'RE FREE TO BE CREATIVE

What's in a name? Well sometimes, it's pretty much everything you need to know. Illustrator, for instance, is a name that says it all - it's a tool made to help you illustrate. You have it lying around. Maybe you created a chart with it once. Now it's sitting fallow, and you continue to ignore it for most projects and draw everything in Photoshop, simply because you know how to use Photoshop. Icons, infographics, flyers, layouts, art - maybe you do it all in Photoshop.

Some illustrators are lucky enough to always have dream clients - you know, the ones who instantly fall in love with all your creations. They have no questions and no requests. Photoshop's fine on those occasions, but not when you're dealing with the client who wants changes. Lots of changes. You send them a lovely (and bulky) raster image that was perfectly created to the client's original specifications, and then they turn around and tell you they've had a last minute rethink; could the clothes be

baby blue, please, not emerald green? And could the entire image be for a billboard, as well as a postcard? You consider yourself a bit of a Photoshop master, but even you can't do the impossible, and the inflexibility of your raster art means you have to redo everything. Better cancel your dinner date.

While Photoshop is great for creating and modifying raster images, if you want scalability and flexibility, then Illustrator has to be the way to go. Even the Photoshop faithful know this, but still too many of them avoid Illustrator - simply because they don't believe that it can be used to create images of real texture and depth. But it can, so prepare to join the House of Vector.

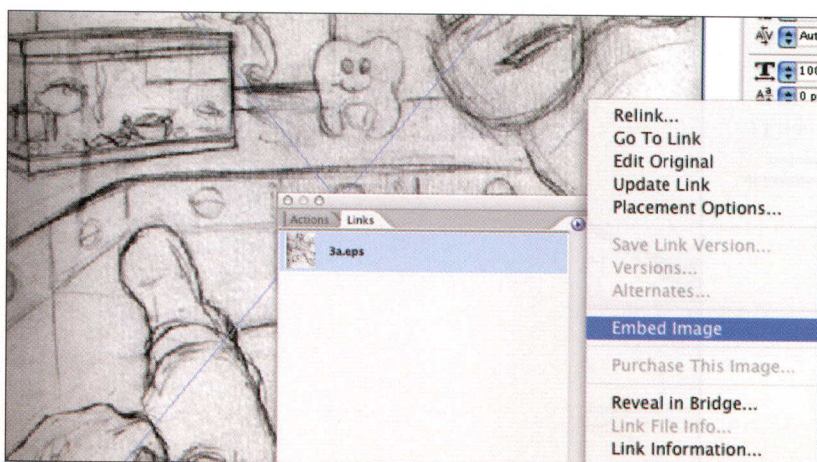
But perhaps it wasn't the depth that gave Photoshop its edge with you, maybe you just gave up on vectors once Streamline became unusable with the advent of Mac OS X. Well, you'll be happy to hear that the functionality of Streamline has been incorporated into CS2. Has your interest been piqued yet? Read on, gentle designer. Knowing the application is just the first step. Then you need to start using it creatively, intuitively and impressively. The following pages highlight a few hints for you to chew on, which will make your life easier and give your work bite. Prepare for a heart-warming and tear-soaked reunion; we're getting back together with vectors.



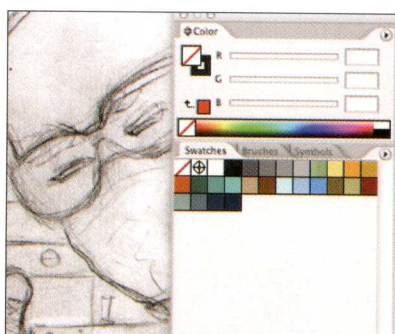
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sketch.jpg



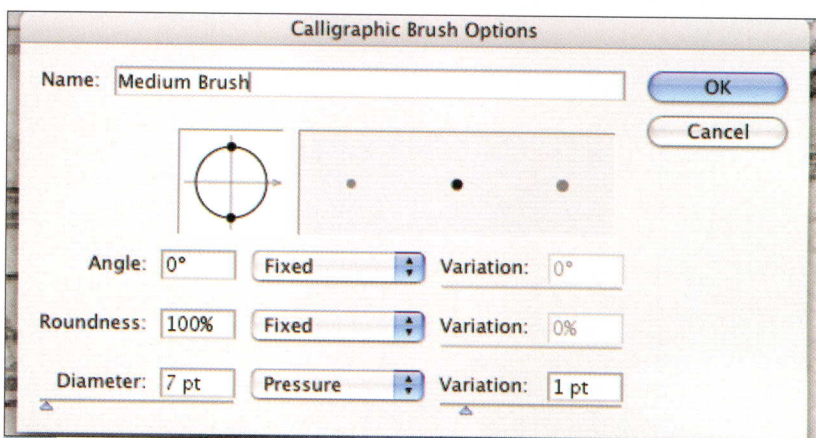
01 INITIAL SKETCH: With an image like this, it's best to start with a rough sketch, because this will make it easier for you to get your dimensions correct. Either create your own, or open the one from the cover CD. Either way, you'll need to clean and size it.



02 NEW DOCUMENT: Place the sketch in a new Illustrator file and save the entire document in RGB format. RGB files are smaller and more manageable when you're working with complex vector art. If you need to print your image later, you can easily change your file to CMYK when the time comes. Now, embed the image using the links window.



03 PRETTY PALETTE: Create a basic palette for your piece. Select and delete all extra colours in the Swatch window. They're unnecessary and will only get in the way. You can use the RGB sliders in the Color window to make your custom colours. Drag and drop them into the Swatch palette. This will help you to work quickly and consistently.

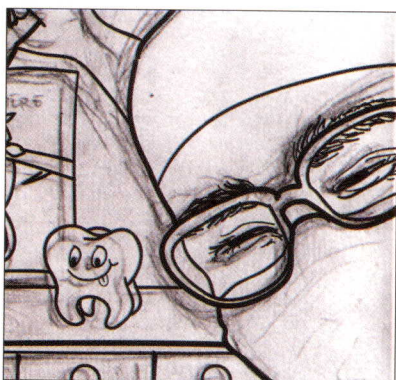


04 CUSTOM BRUSHES: If you've got a Wacom tablet, then use it for this illustration. You can create a pressure-sensitive brush for tablets by clicking on the upper right arrow in the Brushes window. Select New Brush>New Calligraphic Brush. In the Diameter pull-down select Pressure. Then you can choose the thick and thin ends of the brush's range. If you're not using a tablet you can create a non-pressure-sensitive custom brush to use for this exercise.

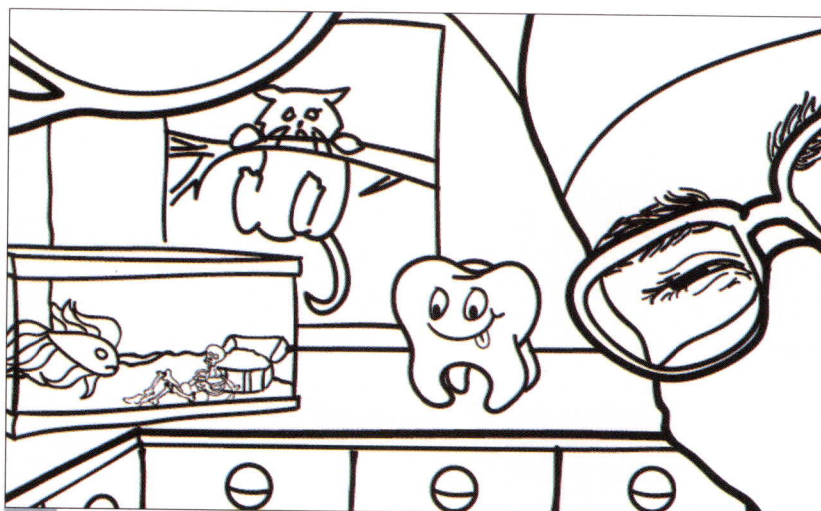
PATTERN UP (PART ONE)



Have you ever thought of using a custom pattern in your illustrations, but never knew how to make one? It's really easy and can be invaluable. Start with a square of colour. Draw a series of stripes within the square. Make sure the stripes are the same height as the box and line up with the edges. Select the pattern and click on Edit>Define Pattern. Name your new pattern and click OK. Your new pattern should now be ready to use in your swatch palette!

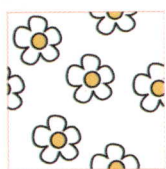
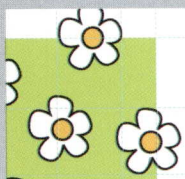


05 LAYER MANAGEMENT: Lock the layer containing your scanned image. Create a new layer for the outlines to sit on. If you take the time to break down different steps into their own layers you'll be able to easily add and remove elements easily. You can also use layers to isolate pieces you'd like to hide while working on other parts of illustration.



06 HARD STROKES: Use your brushes and trace over the sketch to create your outlines. Spend a little time perfecting them. It's easy to go back and see what other brushes or stroke widths would look like. Select them as a group, or individually, and then click on a new brush.

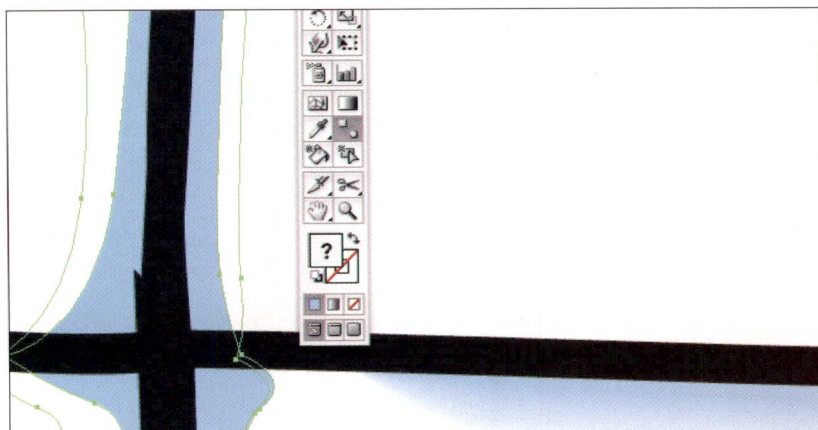
PATTERN UP (PART TWO)



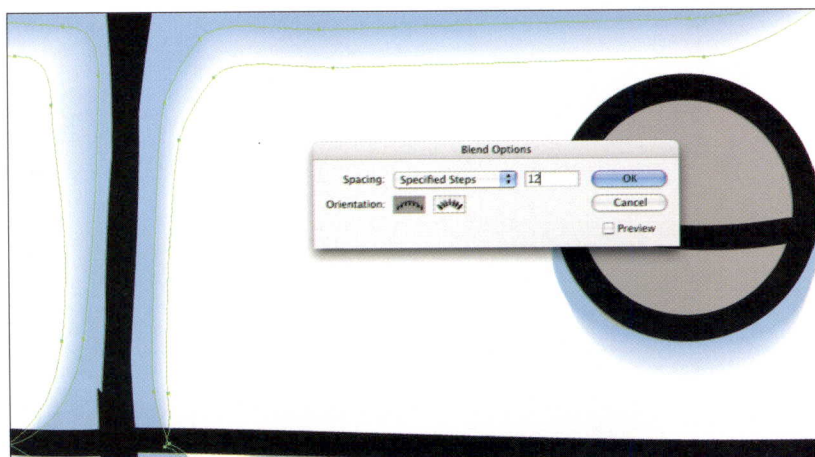
Now that you know how to make a pattern you are ready to start using them creatively. So let's make a repeating flower pattern with a transparent background. That sounds easy enough until you consider that it will have to break on one side of the square and continue on the other. Make a square and place it on a locked layer. Create the flowers. Be sure to convert the paths to outlines. Place guides at the edges of the flowers and cut with the knife tool. Move the flowers to the opposite side of the box. Finally, convert the background to 0% transparency and follow the basic pattern process!



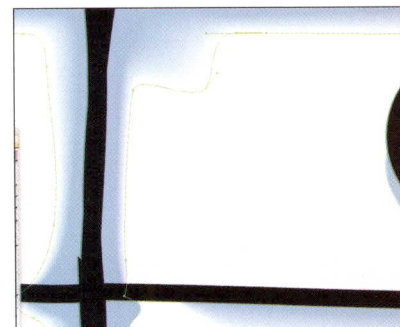
07 BASIC COLOURS: Lock the Outlines layer and create a new layer below it for the colour to sit on. Colour in the whole piece using the swatches from palette you created - you can change them later if you need to.



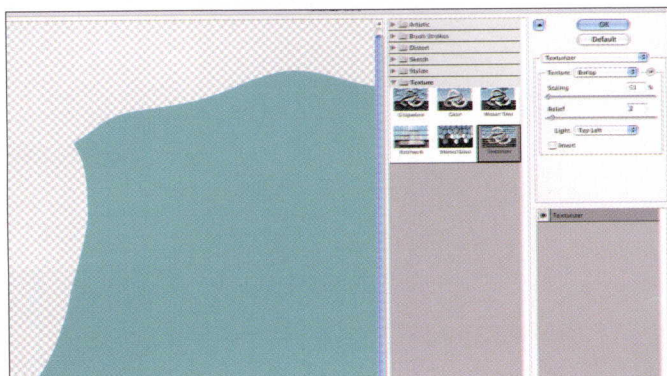
08 BLEND TOOL: The best way to create blends, highlights or shadows that look like raster objects (but are much more versatile) is to use the Blend tool. Create two objects. They can have different colours, transparencies, and shapes. Select the two objects you're going to blend. Using the Blend tool, click on a point in the first object.



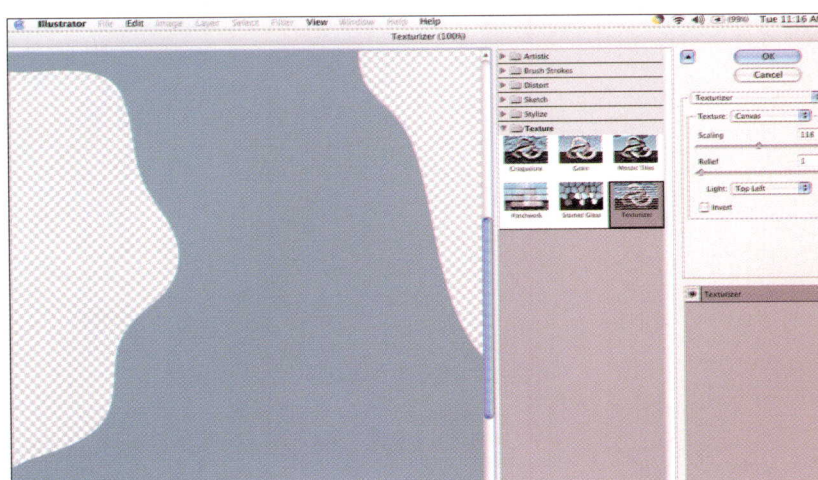
09 CHANGING BLEND ATTRIBUTES: Once you've made the blend you can modify it using the Direct Selection tool. You can also select either object to change any of its attributes (such as colour, effect or transparency). If you want the blend to be smoother or banded, then select the blend and double-click on the Blend tool in the toolbar. Tool options will appear and you can set the preferences. If you're new to the Blend tool you may want to play with it a little bit to get a feel for the way it works.



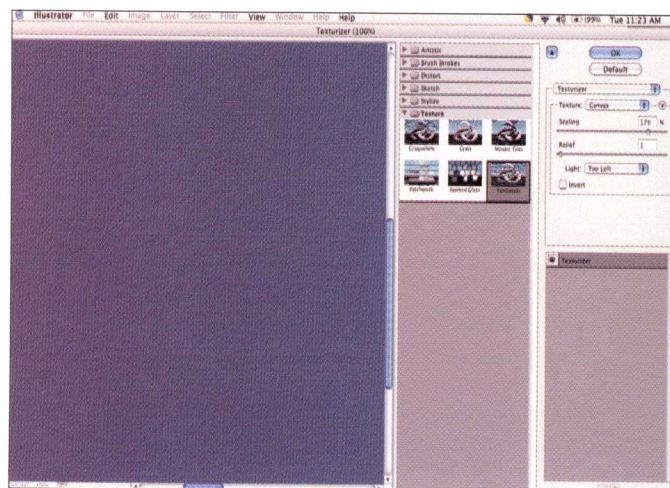
10 ALTER THE BLEND: Once you have created your blend you may realise that it just isn't shading your object the way you want it to. It's an easy fix. Use the Direct Selection tool to grab either the inner or outer shapes in the blend. Move the anchors to change the blend. If you add handles (in the Pen tool menu) you can make a Bezier curve. Moving the edges of the the shapes closer creates a sharper blend, just as moving them further apart creates a softer, gradual blend.



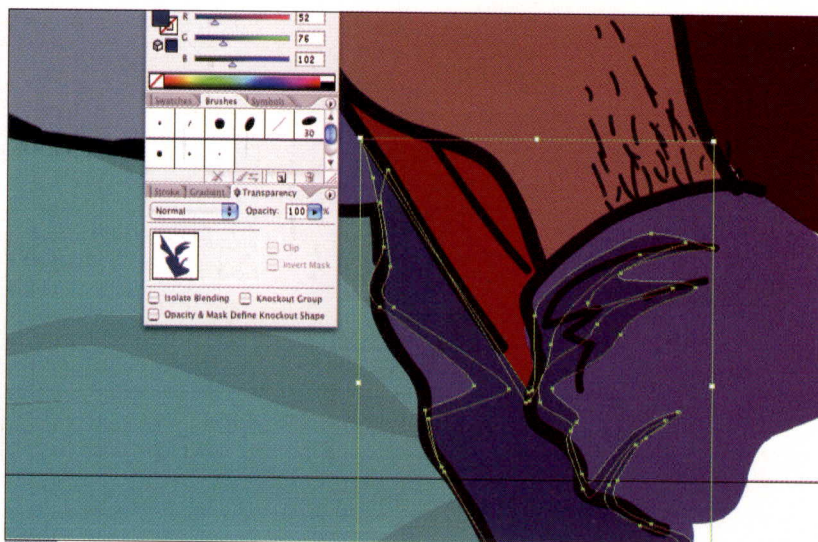
11 IN THE BAG: To apply a burlap-style texture to the bib select the block of colour. In the Effect menu at the top of the screen select Texture>Texturizer. You need to choose 'Burlap', give it a Scaling of '51%', a Relief of '2', and set the Light to come from the 'Top Left'.



12 CANVAS TEXTURE: To apply a canvas-style texture to the jeans select the block of colour. Open the Texturizer using the steps above. The settings this time should be 'Canvas', '118%', '1', and 'Top Left'.

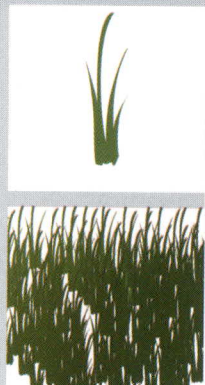


13 GET TOUGH WITH IT: To apply a rougher canvas-style texture to the shirt, select the block of colour. Open the Texturizer using the same step again. The settings are 'Canvas', '176%', '1' and 'Top Left'.

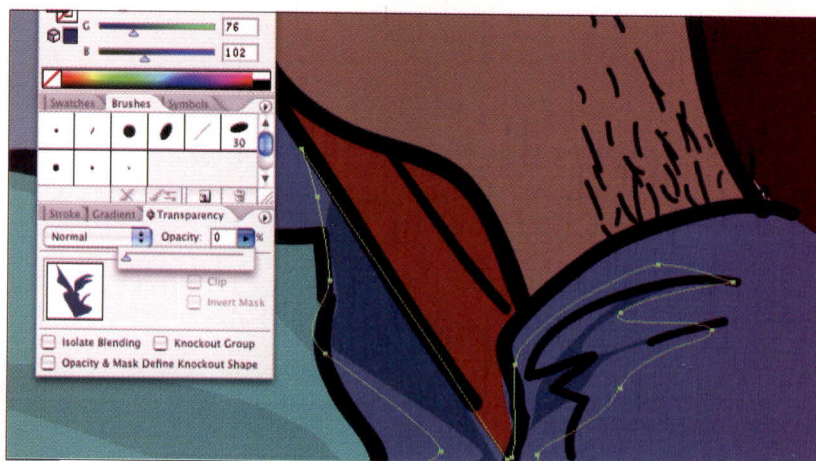


14 CAST A SHADOW: In order to maintain consistency on a textured surface it's good to use transparency when laying shadows. Create the edge of your shadow and the centre using a darker shade of the shirt colour.

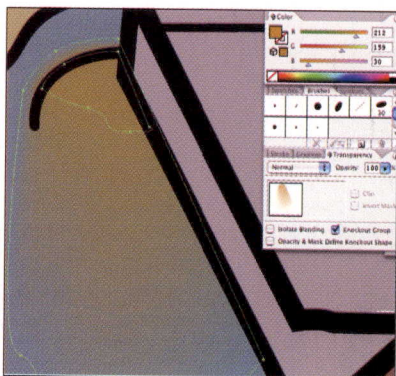
SIMPLE SYMBOL



Using the Symbol Sprayer is a quick way to take care of tedious areas in your illustration. Let's try building a lawn in less than two minutes! First, create a few blades of grass. Select them and go to the Symbols palette. Click the arrow on the right-hand side and select New Symbol. Select the Symbol Sprayer from the toolbar and your new symbol from the palette. Start spraying. You can change the attributes of the blades by double-clicking on the Sprayer button.



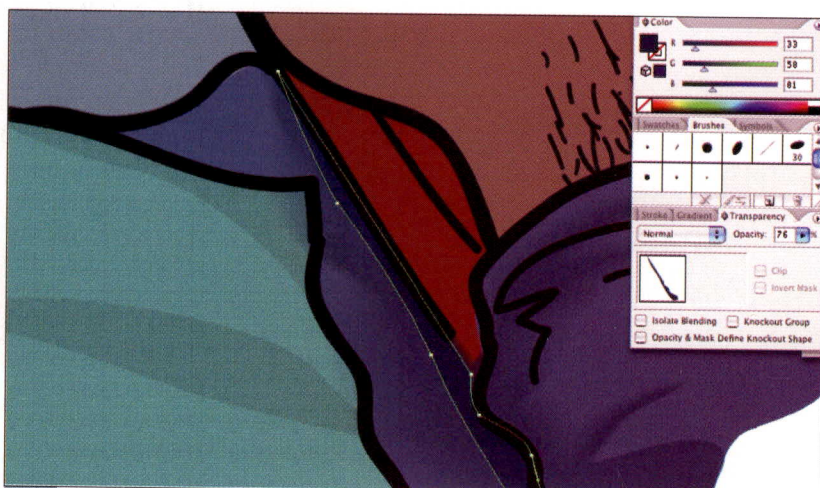
15 SETTING TRANSPARENCY: Use the Direct Selection tool to grab the outer part of the shadow. Set the Opacity to 0% in the Transparency window. Then grab the inner shadow and set the Opacity of that to 50%.



17 SUBTLE FADES: You can add discolouration to solid blocks of colour and textures using the method described in the earlier steps. Instead of using a shade similar to the original (as you would for a shadow), choose a burgundy rust colour, a green grass stain colour, or whatever you fancy.



16 MAKING A BLEND: Next you need to create the shading with the Blend tool. Just pick it up and then select a point on the inner piece and a point on the outer piece of the shadow. Adjust the blend manually with the Direct Selection tool until you are happy with the results.

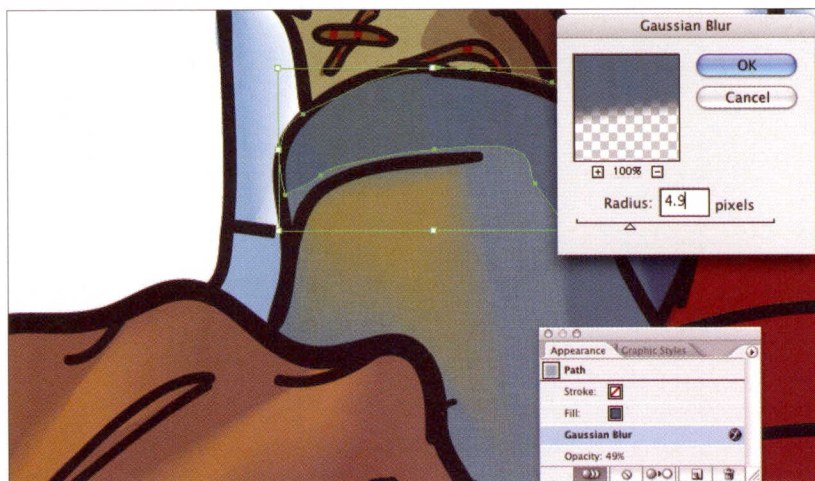


18 HARD SHADOWS: To create harder shadows, just draw a single shadow and change the transparency without making a blend. This is perfect for shadows cast by strong light, such as the shadow under the arm rest.

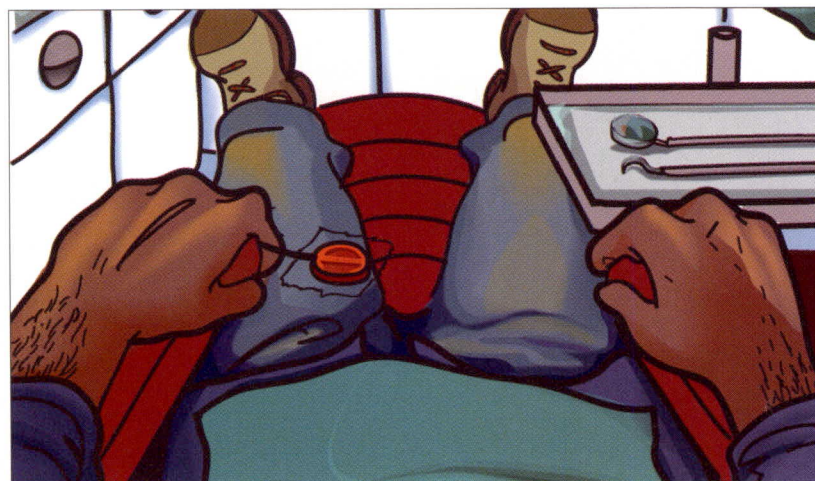
GOING BACK TO THE VECTOR



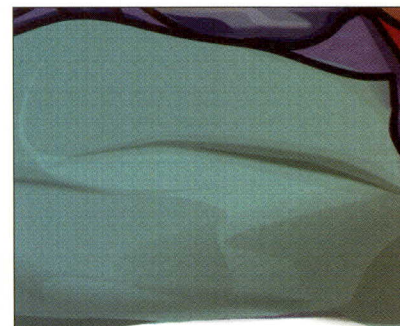
Remember using Streamline? Wasn't it great to be able to convert raster images to vector? Well, you can do it again with the Live Trace tool in Illustrator CS2. First, place an image in an Illustrator file. While the image is selected you should click on Object>Live Trace>Tracing Options. Getting the conversion right is a matter of trial and error. Play around with it until you're pleased with the results. When you're ready select Object>Live Trace>Expand.



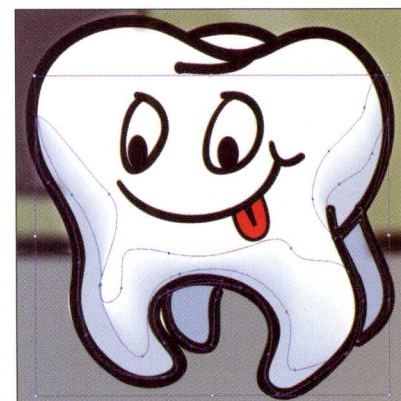
19 SOFT SHADOWS: To lay defined - yet soft-edged - shadows, try using a blur and transparency. To create a blurred shadow draw a single shadow shape. In the Effect menu at the top of the screen select Blur, and then Gaussian Blur. The sample blur on the pant leg has a radius of 4.9 pixels and 49% transparency.



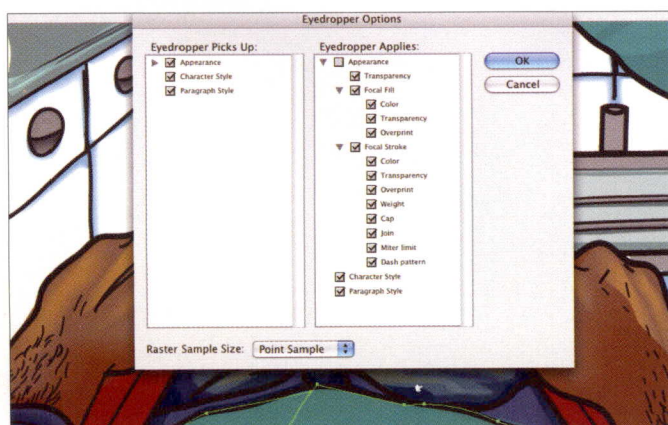
21 MAKING DEPTH: Using the techniques already outlined, begin to fill in the clothing and skin. To create a lighter or darker shade of one of the swatch colours, hold down the Shift key while moving the RGB sliders. Be sure to use natural skin tones (shades of brown) to make your shadows on exposed skin. Using a black transparency for shadows can make skin appear grey.



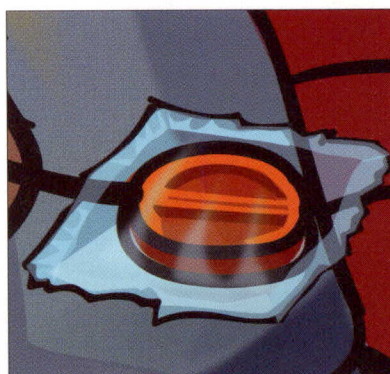
20 FOLD YOUR CLOTHES: Layering transparent shadows will create the illusion of folds in the clothing. You can easily create ridges dips with blurs, colours and transparencies of your choice. The creation of gauzy clothing is something particularly effective you can do with this technique.



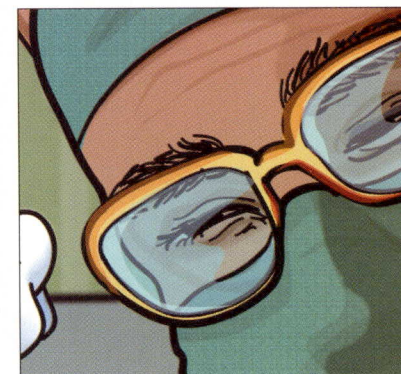
22 TOOTH DECAY: Use the Blend tool to create mass in an object. Figure out how shadows and highlights should lay on the object, keeping in mind that the tool allows you to alternate between softer and harder edges within a single blend. If you need a visual reference to make the shadow fall properly, then do an image search online.



23 EYEDROPPER ATTRIBUTES: To duplicate the blur, colour, or transparency, you can use the Eyedropper tool. Double-click on the Eyedropper tool in the Tool palette to make sure Appearance is selected. Use the Direct Select tool to apply the attributes to the new area.



24 MAINTAINING COLOUR: To fake the transparency without losing the nice bright colours, put the transparent piece in the back and a few shine streaks on top. Leave the bright object (the lollipop in this case) mostly exposed. Let it pop!



25 GLOSSY EFFECTS: Add blurred and transparent highlights on a layer above the outline layer to give the object a bright and shiny look. If you use extreme colour variations for highlights and shadows it will make the object appear glossier.

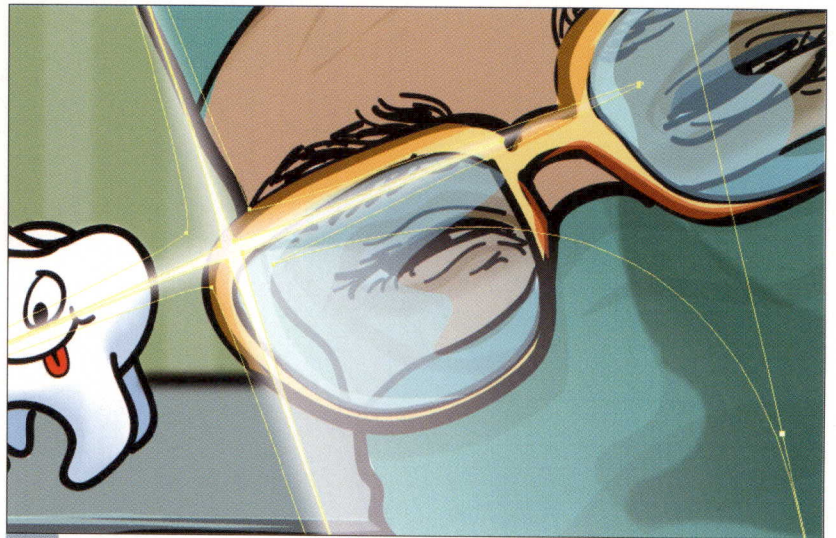
SHRINK, CRINKLE
AND DESTROY



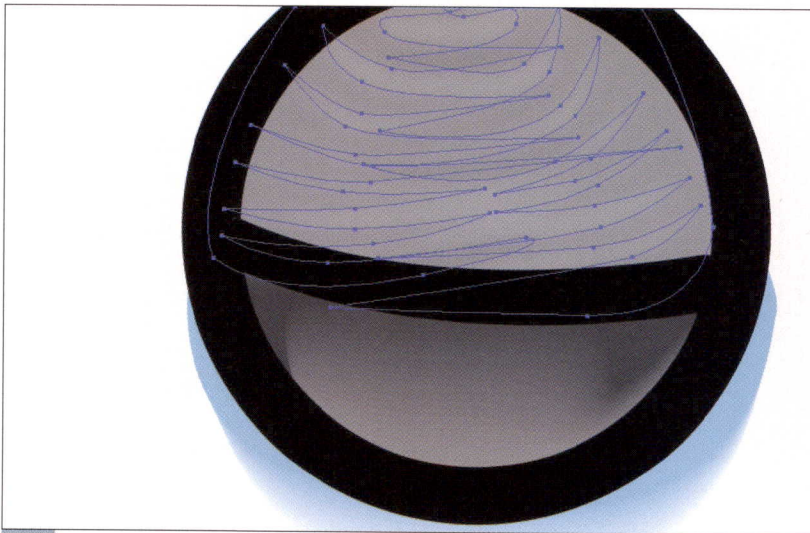
Have you ever needed to tweak an object, but found the Distort and Transform effects aren't doing what you need them to do? Instead, try using the Warp Tool to do it manually. Double-click on the tool to select the preferences you'd like. In less than 30 seconds you can transform a ladybug into a raisin!



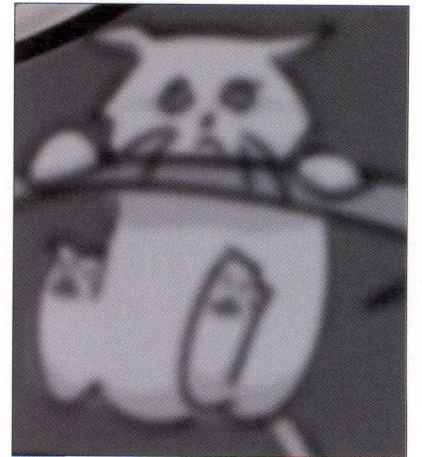
26 MAKE IT MATTE: When you're drawing a matte transparent object, such as these vinyl gloves, be sure not to vary the colour or the level of transparency too greatly. Drastic colour or transparency shifts will make the object appear glossy.



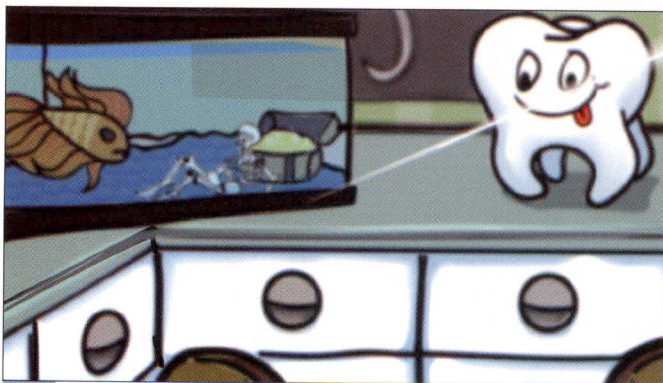
27 GLINT IN YOUR EYE: To construct a glint off a glossy surface: draw a long, thin star burst. Give it an Opacity of 71% and duplicate it. Use the original to make a blend into a larger star with 0% Opacity. Place the duplicate on top of the finished blended star burst.



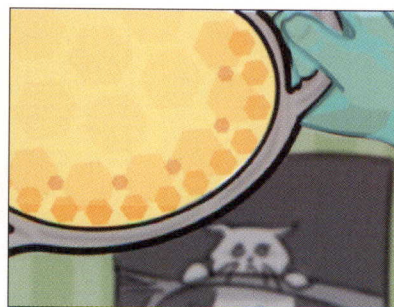
28 BRUSHED STEEL: Give the drawer pulls a brushed steel look by creating overlapping finger-like shadows, and apply a blend. This is a good way to create a texture that you'll have more control over. If you'd like to create a pitted surface you can do the same thing, except use dots of varying size. You can even make it a pattern!



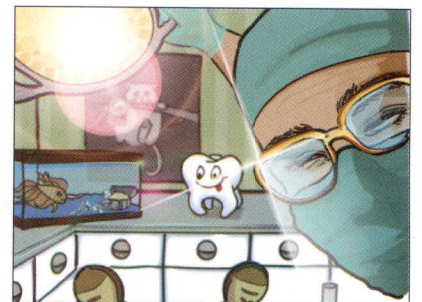
29 DISTANT PERSPECTIVE: To create an illusion of distance, the image can be split up into four sections. The farthest section contains the poster and the wallpaper. Select all elements comprising those pieces and give them a Gaussian Blur of 8.6.



30 MID-RANGE PERSPECTIVE: Now you can blur the fish tank, novelty tooth statuette, and back row of cabinets. Select all of these elements and give them a 4.9 Gaussian Blur.



31 CLOSE PERSPECTIVE: Next, grab the counter top, the side-facing drawers, the dentist's hand and the light. Give them a Gaussian blur of 2.8. The fourth section contains all other art in the foreground, which means you don't need to give it a blur at all.

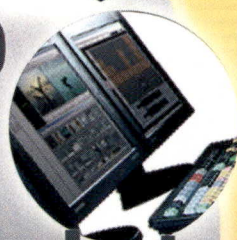


32 LENS FLARE: For a nice finishing touch, use the Flare tool to create a lens flare coming from the overhead light. Lens flares are nice photographic effects. Another photographic effect that could be applied at the end of the project is the Fish Eye.



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PORTFOLIO #1

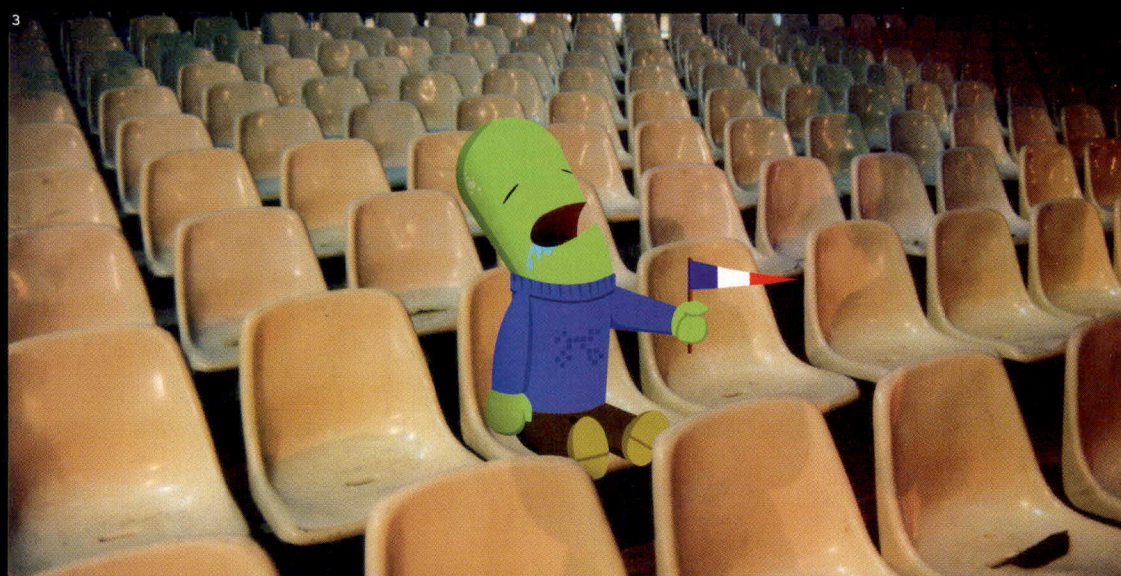
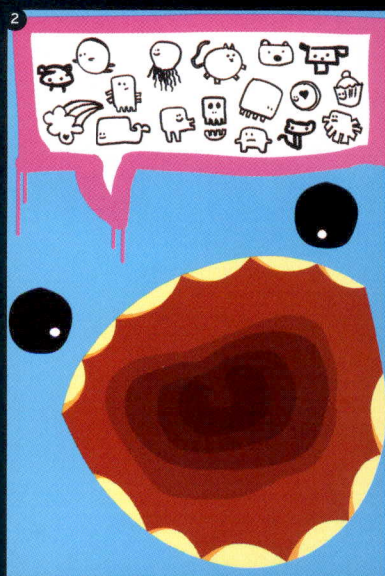


WACKY CHARACTERS IS WHAT PESKIMO IS ALL ABOUT. AKA JODIE DAVIS AND DAVID PARTINGTON, THIS CREATIVE COUPLE ARE MAKING A BIG SPLASH ON THE ILLUSTRATION SCENE

The Peskimo twosome met at Leeds Metropolitan, where David was studying Multimedia Technology and Jodie was studying Graphic Arts and Design. They hit it off straight away but didn't start working as a team until they moved in together two years ago. Illustration was first thing Peskimo tackled, and as you can see, a style was quickly born of "textured patterns, burping monsters and cute animals". Doing work for MTV set them on the road to animation, and one of their ambitions is to "move into this area commercially. One day want to have our own cartoon series with spin-off lunch boxes and toys and everything!"

While both David and Jodie currently have day jobs, their evenings are taken up with Peskimo. They explain: "We both work on our projects together. David is the techy one and does most of the tricky computer stuff, while Jodie sources the textures and materials." David also admits: "Jodie thinks of the more unusual ideas and possibilities that I would otherwise avoid."

See more of David and Jodie's work by visiting www.peskimo.com, and make sure you hang around, as you can also browse work from other artists.



SEE YOUR WORK ON THESE PAGES

Portfolio offers you the chance to grab the exposure you deserve. If you have a collection of digital art that you'd like to share, send it in to dca@paragon.co.uk or stick it on a CD and post it to Portfolio, Digital Creative Arts, Highbury Entertainment Ltd, Paragon House, St Peters Road, Bournemouth, Dorset, BH1 2JS. Unfortunately we can't return any work sent to us.

1. Kruger Warriors (2005)

Software used: Flash MX, Illustrator 9

"Colours are often dictated by a background image or pattern. This particular image needed to be black and white, so it posed an immediate problem to our usual approach of using bright colours. In the end we tried our hand at some high contrast styling."

2. International Language of Characters (2004)

Software used: Flash 5, Photoshop 7

"We spend evenings drawing many characters in our sketch books, and these are all scanned in and used as and when we need them."

3. Tour de France (2004)

Software used: Flash 5, Photoshop 7

"Jodie visited Paris and saw the end of the Tour de France. She took this picture after the crowds had gone. We thought it was a great photo with lovely colours and angles and wanted to use it. So we thought about what kind of Parisian spectator monster would be there and set about creating him."

4. Designer Love (2005)

Software used: Flash MX

"We start an image by brainstorming the brief. Then we pick an idea and work it into a sketch. For this image we printed out our own font and sketched onto it. It changed very little from that sketch."

5. Monster Bus (2005)

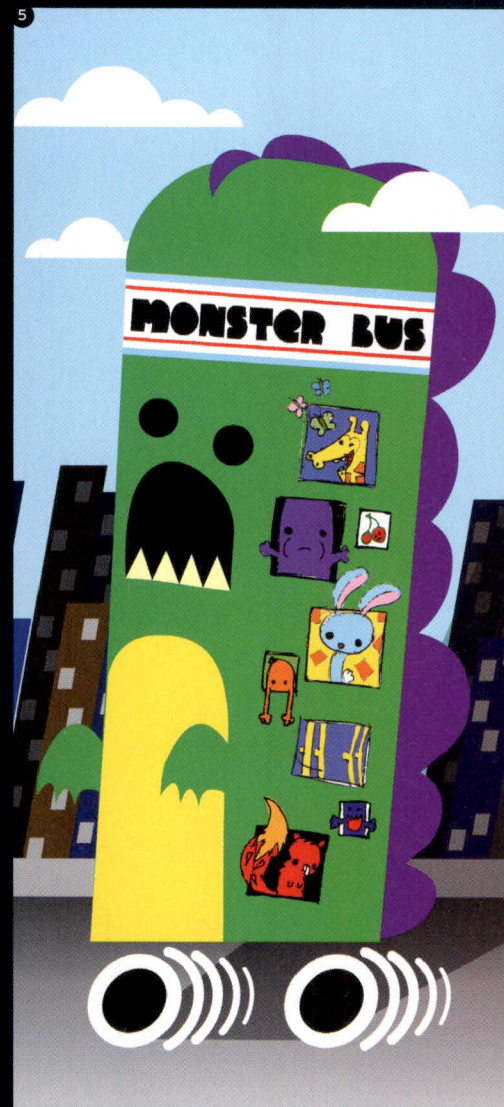
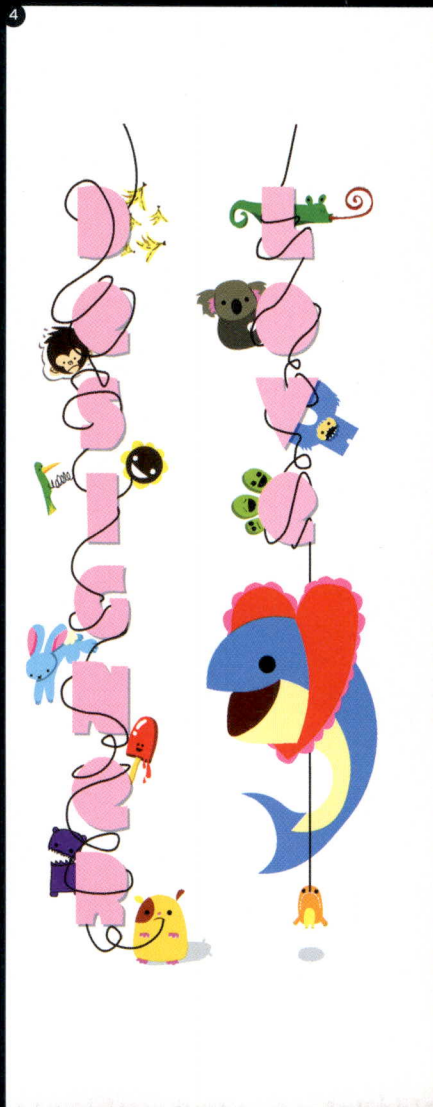
Software used: Flash MX, Photoshop CS1

"Characters are what we concentrate on, but dropping a character onto a background or into a setting is the icing on a cake. We try to keep our characters clean and smooth and either very angry or very cute."

6. Menagerie (2003-5)

Software: Flash MX

"The more an image has in it, the more difficult it is to put down. This image will probably never be finished! We do tend to do endless tweaking, so you have to pull us away or give us a strict deadline."



PORTFOLIO #2



PHOTOGRAPHER, REVEGETATION OFFICER AND NATURE LOVER, BILL DOYLE ALSO MANAGES TO SPEND SOME QUALITY TIME IN PHOTOSHOP, AS YOU CAN SEE HERE

Bill Doyle loves nature, and growing up in Australia means he's seen a lot of it. As he explains: "One of the great advantages of being an Australian is exposure to large tracts of relatively untouched landscape. I've loved it since I was a kid, where I spent much of my time wandering or riding bicycles in a national park a few streets from my home."

It's hardly surprising that it was through his love of the natural world that he came to digital art. A natural doodler, it was only when he needed to create a poster for an indigenous revegetators group (indigenous revegetators restore the original vegetation to cleared areas) back in the mid-nineties that he picked up Photoshop. He's even come up with a chaos theory to explain his process: "Computers use the most basic rule of all ('something/nothing') and pulverise it through a mind-numbing series of iterations to create an elaborate and useful world - graphic programs can take advantage of relatively simple, linear mathematical iterations to allow designers and artists to mirror natural complexity." See <http://homepages.picknowl.com.au/unknownsa> for more.



1_Uncertain Reef (2005)

Software used: Photoshop 7

"I favour warm oranges through to dark numbers for my graphic work. This piece uses the warm tones, while Night Tide 1 uses cooler colours. I think it's best to avoid too broad a spectrum, which is probably based on my primary interest in texture and my experience on canvas - which reinforces the old rule-of-thumb that you can either have form or colour, but not both."

2_Global Treasure (2005)

Software used: Photoshop 7

"This photo was taken for The Wilderness Society on World Environment Day 2004. A high-quality edge-only Smart Blur filtered copy of the base image overlays the original photo. Two Solid fill layers of semi-complementary colours are created, and the layer modes tweaked. Above these the 'drawing' outlines are created by using a solid dark-coloured fill of a 1-pixel expansion of the negative of the original selection."

3_The Opium Wars (2005)

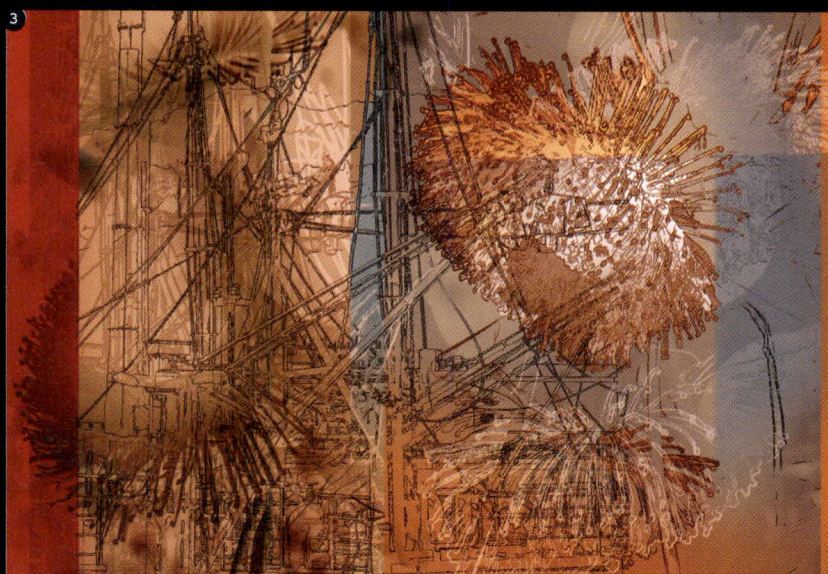
Software used: Photoshop 7

"I rarely 'contrive' a photo for graphic purposes because this smacks of the very refinement I'm trying to avoid. Two contrasting photos form the base of this image. One was taken looking through the cranes of a professional fishing trawler of the smokestacks of South Australia's major gas-fired power station. The other was taken a thousand kilometers away in the Yellabinna wilderness on the edge of the Ngarla Rocks."

4_Night Tide 1 (2005)

Software used: Photoshop 7

"I work on an image generally for one session only, saving multiple flattened iterations of the file as I go. When I feel any new processes or variations won't add anything to the image (or when I'm desperately tired or hungry) I then go on to something else. Later I'll return to find the best of the saved images when I'm no longer as 'involved' in the piece. For example, this is one of 29 incarnations of the same image created over a four-hour period."



PORTFOLIO #3

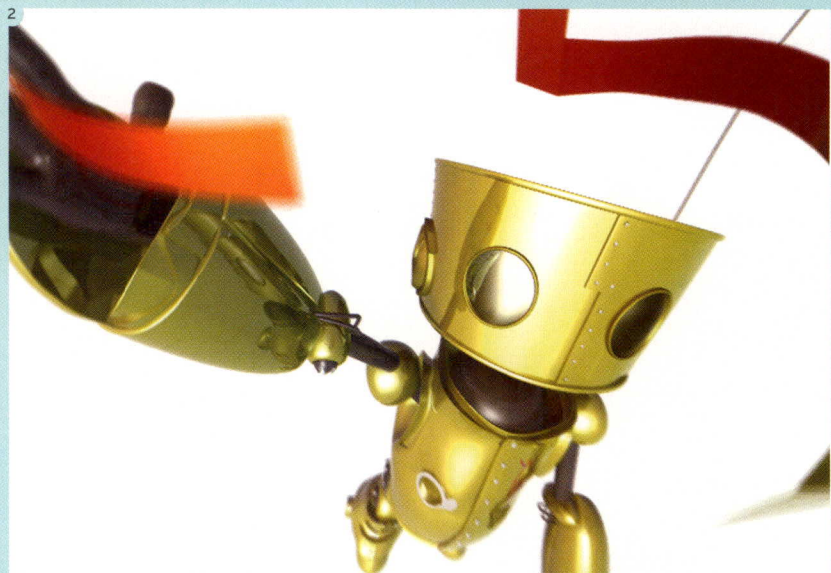
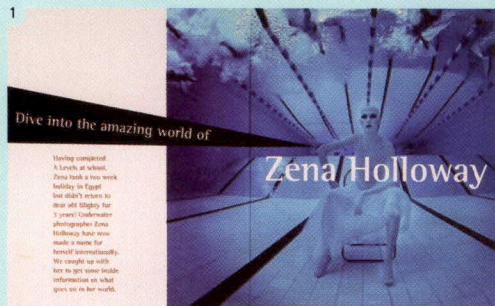
University College Falmouth BA (HONS) GRAPHIC DESIGN

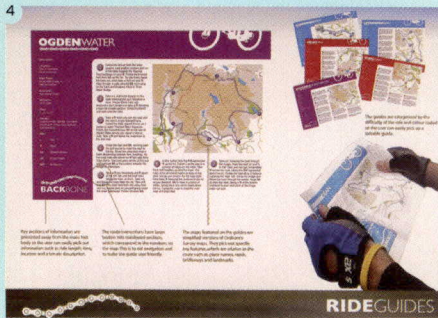
Tin mines, surfing and pasties aren't the only good things to come out of Cornwall, as we discover as we delve into University College's Graphic Design portfolio

The BA (Hons) Graphic Design course at University College Falmouth offers the students the opportunity to either retain a broad approach to the study of Graphic Design, or to develop areas of specialism. Areas include the moving image, television graphics, interactivity, packaging, branding, information design and corporate identity.

"We see graphic design as a problem solving activity, informed by a developed sense of visual language and an awareness of the broader responsibilities we have within our society. This simple philosophy underpins all that we do and gains the respect of potential employers. Students benefit from visits to design consultancies in London and Amsterdam, an extensive visiting speaker programme that attracts top designers, and work placement opportunities," says course leader Jon Unwin.

The course's reputation continues to be enhanced by success in national student competitions. This year students have gained two RSA awards, two D&AD nominations, nine commendations in the Young Creative Network awards and two merits in the ISTD assessment scheme. Recent graduates have found employment in some of the top design locations, including Pentagram, BBC Television, Imagination, Design Bridge, and Enterprise IG. "Falmouth gave me an unrivalled grounding in my career. The tutors had an inclusive regime, and the depth of support is something unique," said graduate Graham Beale, now an Interactive Designer at BBC Interactive. For more information, www.falmouth.ac.uk is the place to go.





IDA GRIMSRUD

1 Deep Magazine Spread (2005)

Software used: Photoshop 7, QuarkXPress

STUART MADDEN

2 Robot (2005)

Software used: Maya, After Effects

GARY MEADOWCROFT

3 Bacardi Breezer Packaging (2005)

Software used: Photoshop 7, Illustrator

SEE YOUR WORK HERE!

Whether you're a student or a tutor, get in touch with us at dca@digitalcreativearts.co.uk if you'd like to see your course featured in the pages of DCA. You can be studying animation, illustration or interactive media - as long as it's a form of digital creativity then we're interested!

ED GEALL

4 Backbone Ride Guides (2005)

Software used: Photoshop 7, Director, Dreamweaver

LUKE BUTTERWORTH

5 Lake District Poster (2005)

Software used: Photoshop 7, Illustrator

RODNEY BOOT

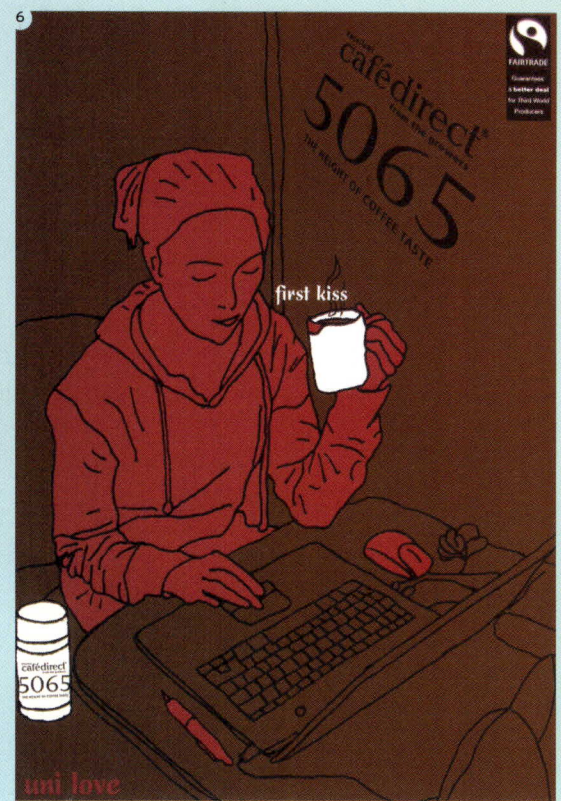
6 Cafe Direct Promotion (2005)

Software used: Photoshop, InDesign

SHIVANI MEHRA

7 Sunburn Warning Poster (2005)

Software used: Photoshop 7, QuarkXPress



GEORGE CAIRNS has more than a decade of video production under his belt, and has written about digital compositing for a variety of magazines. George recently co-wrote the book *Designing DVD Menus*. Head on over to www.georgecairns.com for more details.



Bluescreen on a budget

TAKE ON THE MIGHT OF HOLLYWOOD WITHOUT
BREAKING THE BANK, AS WE EXPLAIN HOW TO SHOOT
BLUESCREEN (IT'S CHEAPER THAN YOU THINK!)

Since the earliest days of the cinema, creative moviemakers have experimented with techniques to combine their actors and separately filmed footage realistically in one shot. Early compositing techniques were very basic however. For instance, actors would sit in stationary cars in studios and perform while footage shot from a moving vehicle was projected behind. This allowed the actors to concentrate on performance, without having to worry about the logistics of shooting, acting and driving on location. Early filmmakers also seized the opportunities offered by optical film processing techniques to be more creative, and mixed footage of actors with shots of spiders/cats/lizards and so forth. This resulted in a whole genre of creature-based science fiction B Movies, like *The Incredible Shrinking Man* and *Attack of the 50 Ft. Woman*.

In the early 1970s the BBC experimented with video compositing effects. Colour Separation Overlay (CSO) was a studio-bound technique where actors performed against a brightly lit bluescreen. The video signal's blue component was keyed out via a mixing desk and replaced by other footage. The composite image was often less than convincing due to a strong halo of blue around the actor's outline, but that didn't stop pioneering shows like *Doctor Who* from using the technique in dozens of episodes. Chromakey (as the technique was called outside the BBC) became part of everyday broadcasting, and was used to place colourful graphics behind weather presenters, for example.

Thanks to the digital revolution, it's now possible to shoot against bluescreen and create a perfect composite image without any of the unwanted artifacts that hampered the early optical film and analogue video compositors. This has led to an explosion in bluescreen work. To create movies like *Sin City*, the actors worked almost exclusively against blue (and green) screens so that the filmmakers could add them to virtual sets. And since the backdrops created in 3D packages are so impressive, you can literally set your movie anywhere - and not leave the studio.

But Hollywood can step aside. Our workshop will show you how to shoot your own bluescreen footage without taking out a second mortgage. We'll tell you where to get the cheapest rigs, how to shoot them successfully and how to composite your footage effectively using desktop packages like Premiere Pro.







ON THE CD

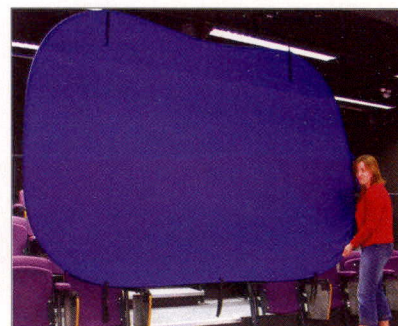
Bluescreen.avi
Background.avi
Finished Composite.avi



01 PLAN YOUR SHOOT: Before you film, you'll need to work out exactly what type of chromakey rig you'll need. Don't be daunted by documentaries on Hollywood blockbusters that show actors performing against massive blue or green backdrops. Trust us; you can create an effective composite shot using a variety of budget bluescreen rigs.



02 DIY BLUESCREEN: For a cheap but functional bluescreen pop into Ryman the stationer on the high street. You can buy large sheets of thick blue card (200 gsm thick) for £1.49 each. You can then tape the back of these sheets together to create a decent sized screen that will hang on a wall.



03 WIDE: Lastolite (www.lastolite.com) provides a 6-foot by 9-foot collapsible chromakey rig for around £155. It comes in a small storage bag and can easily be carried around. The screen has straps for you to hang it from objects, or alternatively clip the screen to two telescopic stands. Be warned - it takes a bit of practice to collapse the screen!

HEAD TO HEAD: BLUE VS. GREEN

A couple of the Chromakey screens we mention in this feature are blue on one side and green on the other. Is there any reason to prefer one colour to another? Well, consider costume before rigging a screen. If your actor is wearing blue jeans for example, then a greenscreen is more appropriate or the clothing will vanish along with the backdrop. Greenscreens provide more luminance, which means they create lighter edges around the actor than bluescreen. This makes greenscreen a better colour to use if you're adding the actors to lighter sequences shot in daylight, for example. However, greenscreen tends to create more spill than bluescreen, which could cause holes in the actor during the post-production process.



04 YOU'VE BEEN FRAMED: An even cheaper chromakey option is Lastolite's Chromakey Skylite Pro. This 2x2 metre screen is blue on one side and green on the other. Its collapsible metal support frame costs another £68. The kit is lightweight and portable, allowing you to set it up anywhere.



05 FREE STANDING: The Chromakey Skylite Pro rig has strips of Velcro that makes sure the screen fits tightly to the frame, removing any creases that might cause keying problems in the post-production stage. The rigid metal support frame means you can lean this rig against a wall without forking out extra cash for support stands.



06 IT'S CURTAINS FOR YOU: If you require a bluescreen with more vertical headroom then consider using a curtain and rail set-up. Lastolite provides a large reversible blue/green curtain (3 x 3.5 m) for £238. You can hang this from the support system we mentioned in step 3.



07 LET THERE BE LIGHT: Once you've got hold of a bluescreen, you'll need to light it effectively to get a decent key. Video lighting can be an expensive business and a redhead lighting kit (with three lights) will knock you back around £1000. Check the web for local hire options to avoid blowing that budget!



08 BITS AND BOBS: If you hire a lighting kit, check that it comes with coloured gels and sheets of diffuser. Alternatively, you can buy a gel kit containing diffusers, colour correction and tinted gels from www.formatt.co.uk for around £25. Add a packet of wooden clothes pegs to the mix and you're ready to shoot your footage.



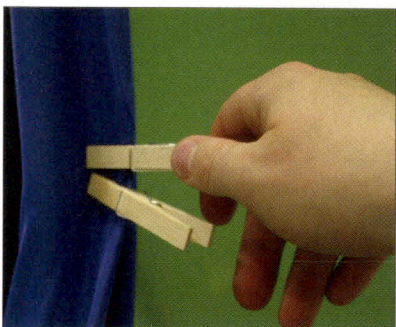
09 RAISE THE CURTAIN: Once you've got your kit sorted out you're ready for the shoot. We used a Lastolite chromakey curtain because it provided plenty of space to get a wide shot of our actor. Thread the support pole through the top of the curtain and place it on the two side stands. Extend the side stands to its maximum height.



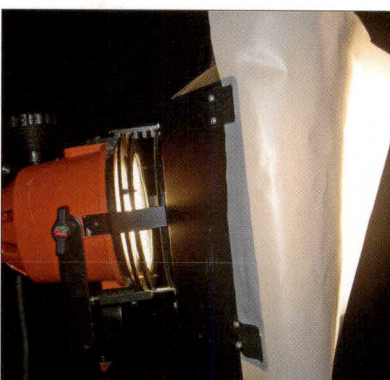
10 IRON OUT WRINKLES: Curtains take more time to prepare than the other rigs featured on page 82. Because they are made of cloth and stored folded, they can have creases that could stop you getting a clean key. Simply hanging the curtain from its support pole won't make it taut enough to remove any creases.



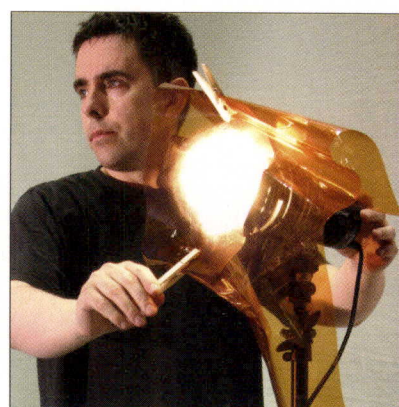
11 WALK THE PLANK: Place planks of wood at the bottom of the curtain to stretch the material. We rested stage weights on the planks to hold them firmly in place, though a couple of bricks should do the same job and keep you on budget. This will remove some of the curtain's sags and creases.



12 OFF THE PEG: Use a few wooden clothes pegs to pinch the material at the sides of the curtain. This will help make the screen more taut and remove any remaining wrinkles. Making a bit of effort to remove creases during the production stage will save you hours of problem solving in the post-production stage.



13 ADD A SOFT LIGHT: Open a light's barn doors as wide as they'll go and peg a sheet of diffuser onto them with wooden pegs (plastic pegs will melt). This will create a large area of soft light to help evenly illuminate the bluescreen. Place the light at a shallow angle to the screen to avoid casting the actor's shadow on it.



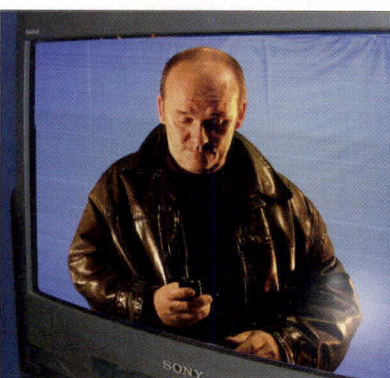
14 BRING IN A BACK LIGHT: Peg or clip an orange gel onto a back (or rim) light and point it to shine on the actor from behind. This adds an orange tint to the actor's outline, which helps stop reflected blue light spilling onto his edges. This makes it easier to key out the blue background in post-production.

LIGHTING TIPS

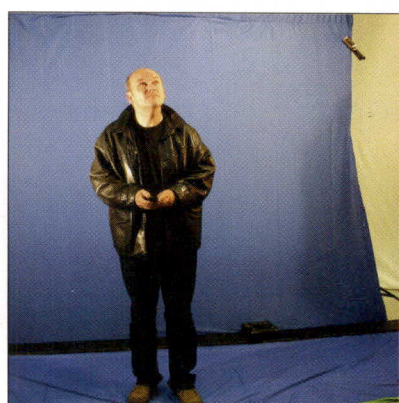
During our bluescreen shoot we backlit the actor with an orange gel to differentiate his edges from the blue backdrop. As well as making it easier to separate the actor from the blue background, this orange tint also simulated the glow from a streetlight in our background footage. When lighting an actor in a bluescreen shoot, always try and match the lighting's direction, angle and colour temperature to the lighting in the background footage that you're going to add in the post-production stage. This will really help the final composite.



15 IRIS CONTROL: Set your camera's iris to manual. Opening the iris a little helps burn out any remaining creases in the blue backdrop. Keeping the iris on manual also stops the exposure changing during the shot. If the intensity of blue varies this will cause you keying problems in post-production.



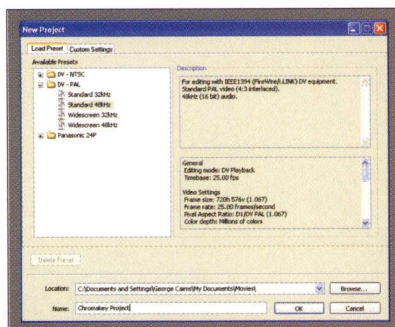
16 MONITOR MAKE SURE: External colour monitors are handy, because it's easier to spot potential problems on a larger screen, especially with things such as focus. What looks sharp in the camera's tiny LCD monitor can often turn out to be soft when seen on a larger screen. You can also spot uneven lighting and creases in the curtain more easily.



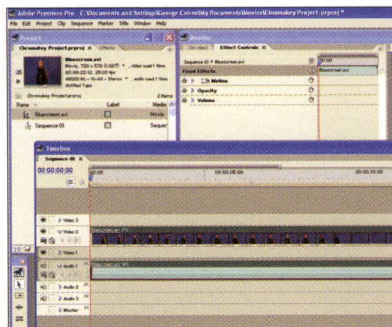
17 ACTION STATIONS: Once you're happy with the lighting you can finally go ahead and shoot. A few bits of tape on the floor will tell him where he can stand without casting a shadow on the screen. Get some long, mid and close-up shots, so you've got lots of options in the post-production stage.

WIDESCREEN

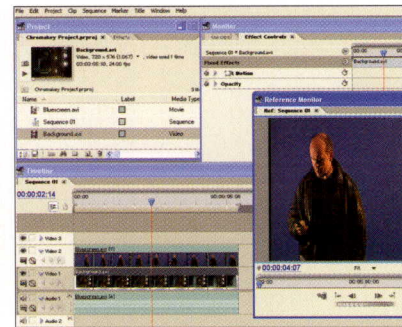
The bluescreen footage that we used in this walkthrough has been optimised for playback on a 16x9 widescreen TV. This means that when we look at the footage in Premiere in the Project window, the figure appears vertically stretched. Don't worry about this distortion, because widescreen TVs will compress the composited and rendered footage to fit the 16x9 aspect ratio, restoring the actor to more normal proportions. Because we are adding a computer-generated background to the scene we had to make sure we rendered it with a pixel aspect ratio of 1.422 to make it stretch vertically too. This ensured that the background city street animation would also compress to a 16 x 9 ratio when played on a widescreen TV.



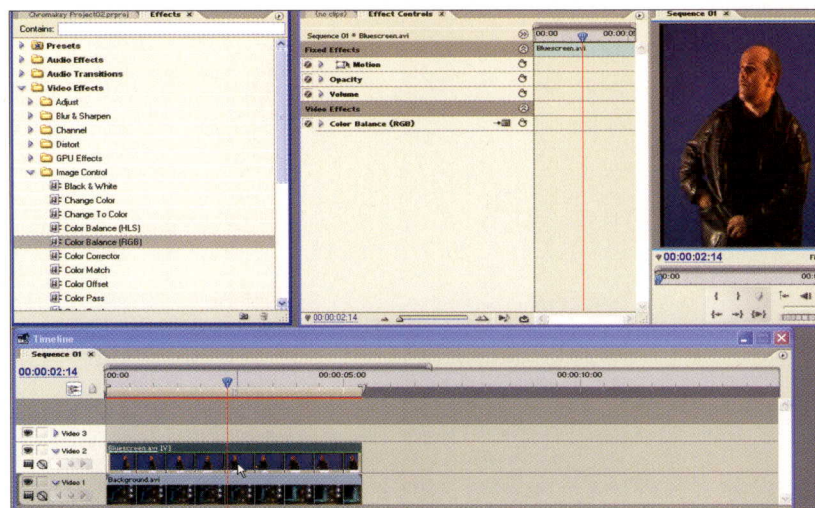
18 REPLACE BACKGROUND: We'll use Adobe Premiere Pro 1.5 for this, though the techniques and tools covered can be applied in many other applications. Open Premiere and choose New Project. Choose a Standard DV - PAL setting.



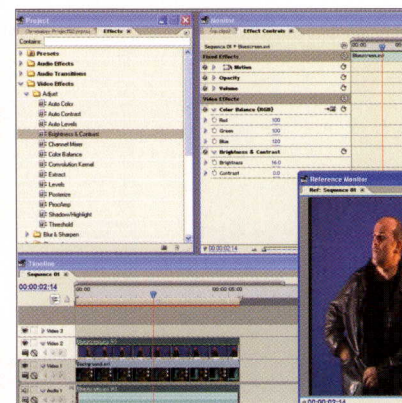
19 FOREGROUND IN: Copy the movie 'Bluescreen.avi' from the CD onto your hard drive. In Premiere choose File>Import and select the movie. It will appear as a thumbnail in the Project window. Drag the movie's thumbnail onto the Video 2 channel.



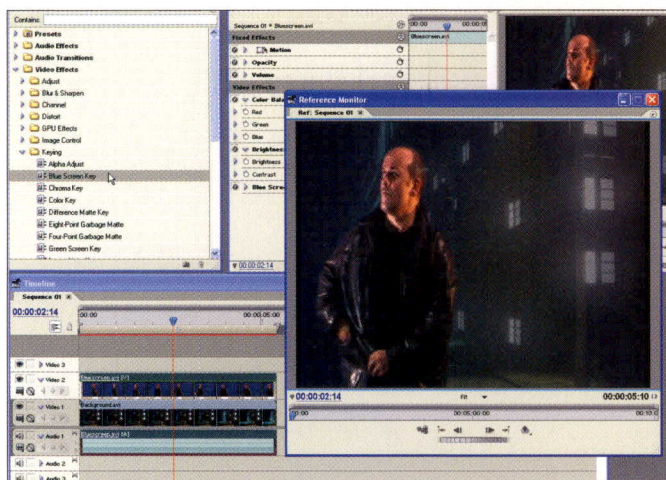
20 BACKGROUND BLUES: Go to File>Import and bring 'Background.avi' into the project. Once you've keyed out the bluescreen element the actor will appear to be walking in a city street. Place the background movie on the Video 1 channel in the Timeline.



21 GET THE BALANCE RIGHT: To make a cleaner, more effective key we can enhance the intensity of the blue background. In the Project window click on the Effects tab. Open the Video Effects Folder. Then open the Image Control Folder. Drag the Color Balance (RGB) icon onto the bluescreen clip in the Video 2 channel.



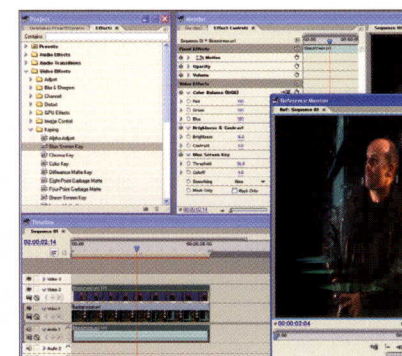
22 TRUE BLUE: Go to Window>Effect Controls. Open up the Color Balance options and change the Blue channel to 120. This will make the blue chromakey curtain look more vivid. Go to the Adjust folder in the Effects tab and add a Brightness/Contrast effect to the Bluescreen clip. Push the Brightness up to 16.



23 ADD A KEY: Go to the Effects tab and open the Keying folder, which is located in the Video Effects folder. Drag the Blue Screen Key effect icon onto the Bluescreen clip in the Video 2 channel. You'll see the background city street appear behind the actor, but it will look a bit too misty and undefined at this stage.



24 CHECK THE MASK: Open up the Blue Screen Key option in the Effect Controls palette. Click on Mask Only. This shows you the alpha channel that the key effect is creating. White areas indicate solid parts of the clip in a similar way to Photoshop's Layer Masks. At this stage the background is grey, making the bluescreen look semi-transparent. There are also patchy holes in the actor.

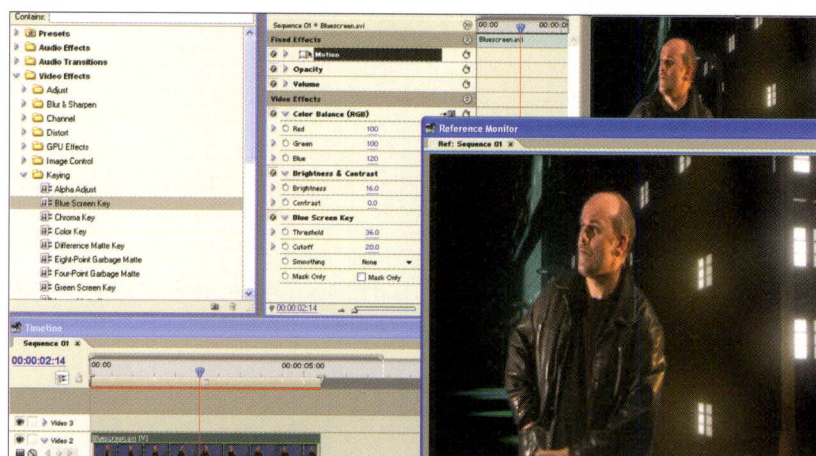


25 THINK THRESHOLD: Turn off Mask Only so you can see the composite image in colour. In the Effect Controls palette go to the Threshold value and reduce it from 100% to 36%. Although this setting gets rid of the blue Chromakey curtain, it does poke a few holes in the actor. We can see some of the background through these holes.

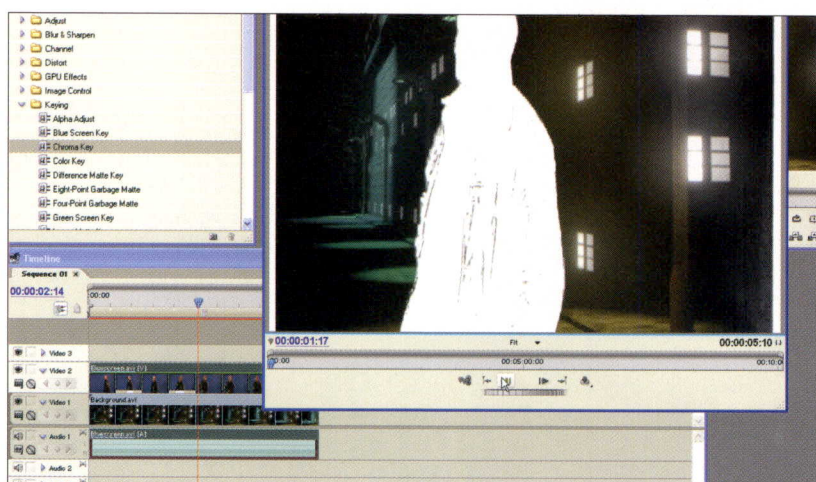
FIX IT IN POST

Software has got so sophisticated that it can tackle a variety of Chromakey-related problems created during the production stage. If a bluescreen has varying shades of blue caused by uneven lighting this can cause holes in the key. Packages such as Adobe After Effects enable you to add as many different levels of blue to the key using the Eye Dropper tool. Sometimes blue or green light spills onto the actor, causing holes in the key. To fix this problem most software will let you colour correct the footage, draw garbage mattes around the problem areas or experiment with spill reduction filters (like the one found in Adobe After Effects). Some directors are so confident that any problem can be fixed in post-production that they rush the production stage and end up with badly lit bluescreen rigs. This attitude certainly keeps compositors in jobs! Of course, if the compositors do their job well then no-one will ever notice any work has been done digitally.

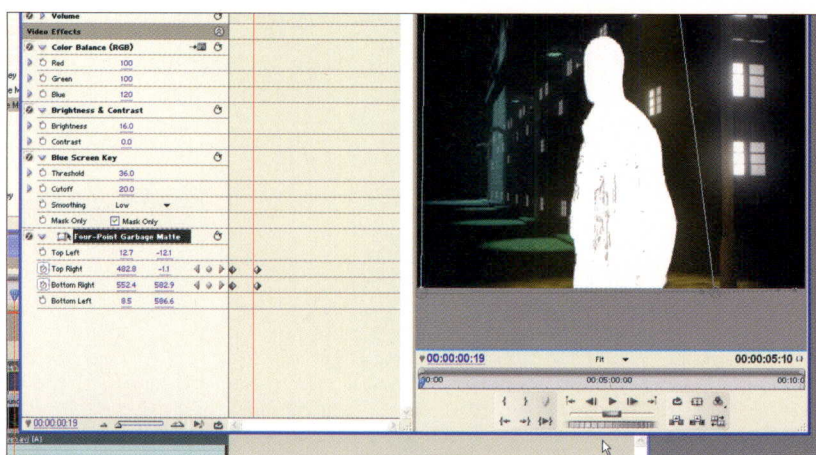
Thanks to Rachel Clark, Dave Green, Paul Hannington, Mark Langley and Jamie Lochhead.



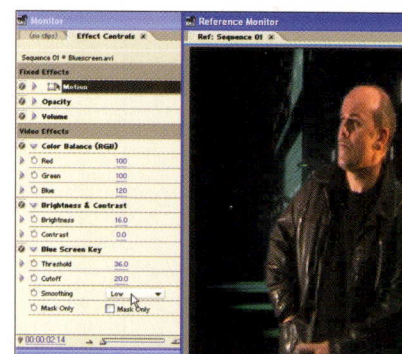
26 CUT-OFF POINT: To fill in the holes in our actor caused by the Blue Screen Key effect's Threshold setting, go to the Cut Off channel. Increase the Cut Off value until the holes disappear – a value of around 20 should do the trick. Don't make the Cut Off value larger than the Threshold value or this will invert the grey and transparent pixels!



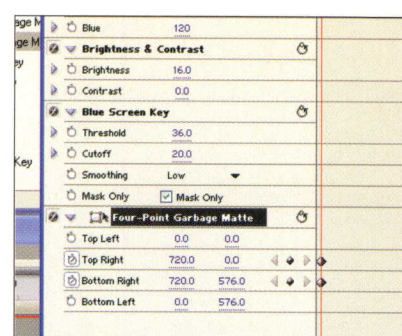
28 CHECK THE MASK: Turn on the Mask Only option. The background's washed-out grey has disappeared and a much stronger white silhouette represents the actor. Scrub through the sequence. At around 00:01:17 you'll notice a speckled patch of grey appears at the bottom right of the screen. This is caused by the actor's shadow, and it will poke a faint hole in the shot.



30 SET KEYFRAMES: Scrub the sequence forward to 00:00:22. You'll see the actor's shadow appear, causing speckles of grey at the right of the screen. Drag the Garbage Matte's Top Right and Bottom Right handles to the left so the speckled area is removed. Be careful not to drag the matte over the actor or he'll vanish. Two new keyframes will be set automatically.



27 SMOOTH OPERATOR: The Blue Screen Key Smoothing option allows you to create a softer blend between the solid and transparent areas of the key. It works by anti-aliasing the edges of the key's greyscale mask. This helps remove any jagged edges around the actor's outline. A Smoothing setting of Low should create a soft edge.



29 GARBAGE ROUTES: Packages like Premiere Pro have tools designed to deal with common keying problems (like shadows) spoiling parts of an otherwise perfect key. Scrub the movie back to Frame 1. Go to the Keying folder in the Effects palette and drag a Four-Point Garbage Matte to your bluescreen clip. Now, click on the clock icons for Top right and Bottom Right to set the keyframes you need for the matte.



31 PREVIEW THE RESULT: Turn off the Mask Only option in the Effects Control palette so you can see the full colour composite image. Press the Return key and Premiere will render a high-quality preview of the sequence. As the actor walks from left to right the keyframes make the Garbage Matte follow him, hiding his shadow when it appears. This helps make a key perfect.



CHRIS OLLIS has been working in character animation for the last 10 years and is currently applying his vast knowledge while animating at Codemasters. You can see more of Chris' work by popping on over to www.intertwined.co.uk and having a browse.



Animate with MotionBuilder

THIS ISSUE, THE MOTIONBUILDER PERSONAL LEARNING EDITION CAN BE FOUND ON THE COVER CD, AND WITH IT COMES A VERITABLE FEAST OF ANIMATION CAPABILITIES

Used throughout the movie and games industry, MotionBuilder is a world-famous animation package that provides an exceptional toolset for both keyframed animation and for the handling of motion capture data. The application has been built around a highly responsive real-time engine, which provides excellent visual feedback for the animator.

Primarily aimed at character work, the package is a one-stop shop for bringing a 3D figure to life. Its powerful IK and FK blended control rigs mix with a flexible curve editor to make motion adjustments a breeze, even when you're working on a large and densely populated scene. Plus it has a huge number of controls, constraints, gadgets and gizmos, which put you firmly in the driving seat, with every aspect of your character being just a mouse click or a slider away.

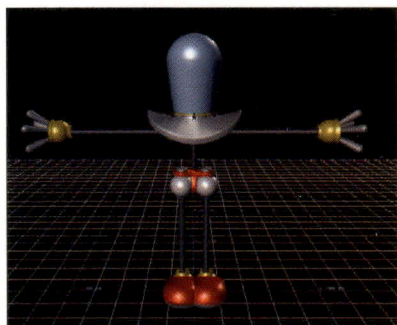
But MotionBuilder isn't all about characters. It also has a simple to use transform, rotate and scale system, which, when combined with a super-fast curve editor, makes animating any object a real joy. Whole scenes can be imported from external packages via the native and universal FBX format and quickly brought to life. The Story window is also home to the PLE version of MotionBuilder Pro's famous Motion Blend tool, a powerful component for blending motion capture files into one another and deciding which parts of the body they effect.

MotionBuilder doesn't pretend to be a full rendering solution in the way most 3D applications are, but it does provide some startling results when it comes to outputting your animation. When you combine the power of the animation tools, the editing of the Story window and then the numerous real-time effects shaders, particle and lighting effects, the render pass becomes far more than just a motion preview. With a little hard work your simple animatic could become the main feature itself. In the tutorial we will bring a new character in from an external package and apply the MotionBuilder control rig to it. From here we will play with some keyframes, some body poses and eventually throw in some motion capture.

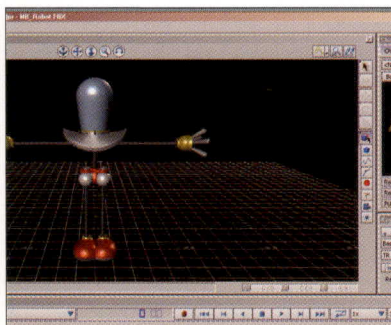


ON THE CD

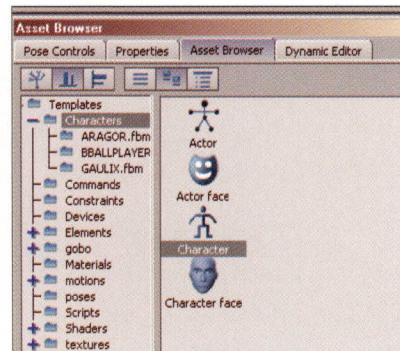
MB_Part3_Start.fbx
MB_Part3_Stop.fbx
MB_Robot.fbx
MB_Robot2.fbx
Tumble.fbx
WalkProud.fbx



01 EASY INTRODUCTIONS: While MotionBuilder comes with some entertaining preset characters, most people use it for animating their own, so let's bring one in. Open the 'MB_Robot.fbx' file from the cover disc; it's a 50s sci-fi robot that has been modelled in 3ds max. The FBX format it is exported as allows most 3D packages to work almost seamlessly with MotionBuilder.



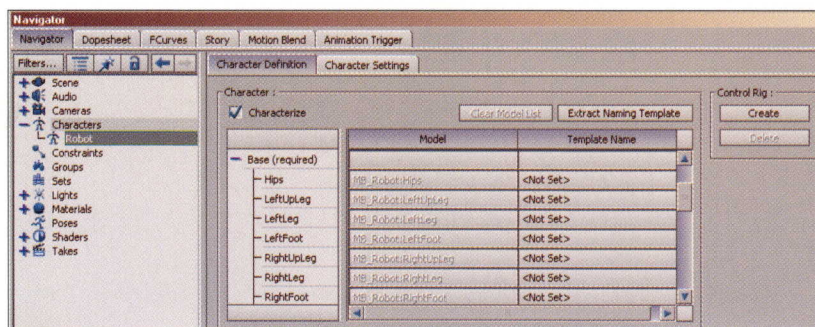
02 ADD CHARACTER: Once it is loaded you should have a screen similar to this. We could go right in and animate the character now using the FK (forward kinematic) bone set up from 3ds max, but that wouldn't make use of MotionBuilder's strengths. So now you should 'characterise' the model, which means identify each component as a complete character and enable all of the tools.



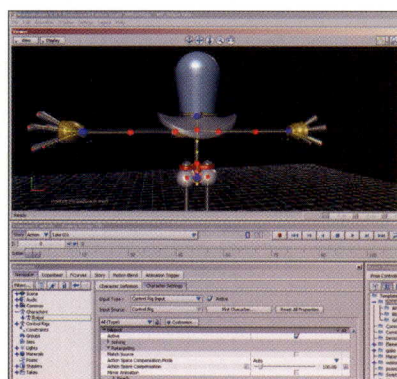
03 START WITH THE SPINE: From the Asset Browser, select Templates and find Character. Drag this icon across the screen and onto the robot's spine so it turns green. When you let go of the mouse a box should appear saying Characterize, so click it to start the process and then select Biped from the next box that appears. That's that done!

IN CONTROL

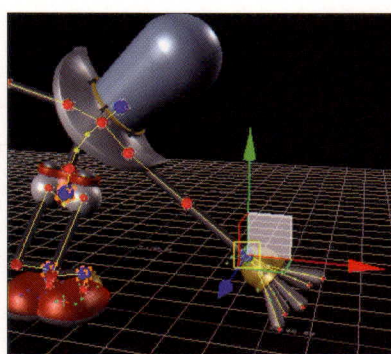
It's very important to know how to get about in a 3D package. Unluckily for you, MotionBuilder has a rather unique navigation method. To move the viewports hold down Shift and the left mouse button. To zoom in and out you want to hold Control with the LMB and to rotate the viewport you want Ctrl, Shift and the LMB. This becomes far more complicated when you start working with cameras and introduce zooms, dollies and rolls! Handy shortcut keys include T, R and S, which logically stand for Transform, Rotate and Scale, and F, which zooms in to the selected object (or zooms out to the whole scene if nothing is selected). Holding down Ctrl and pressing F pops you to the front viewport, press it again and you get the back view. Ctrl R is right and again L gets left. Ctrl and E picks a Perspective or Camera viewport and W brings up the very useful Schematic view. We can guarantee you'll be using these a lot!



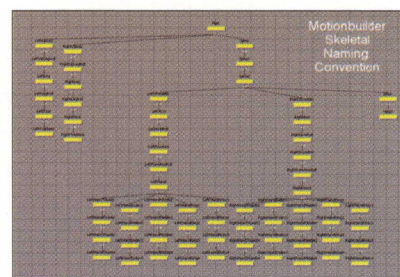
04 GOT A BONE TO PICK: Now go to the Navigator window and select Characters. Rename the entry as Robot. If you now double-click the name Robot, the Character Definition and Settings will appear. Click on the Definition tab and scroll down the list opening up each section as you go (click on the + signs). You will see that all the MAX Bones have been identified and linked to MotionBuilder's character rig.



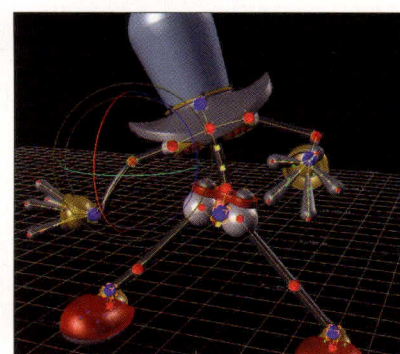
06 TIME TO PLOT: Now that the program knows which bit is which, we'll enable the powerful IK/FK control rig. Select Character Settings and press the Plot Character button. Select Control Rig, then FK/IK, and then Plot. You'll notice some red and blue spheres appear at the character's joints; these are control nodes (effectors) that can be pulled about. Alternatively, select them in the Character Control window.



07 TRANSFORM AND LOCK: Select one of the wrist effectors from the Control Window image. Now press 'T' to bring up the Transform icon and drag that to see the wonderful effect the IK (Inverse Kinematic) rig has on our character. Hopefully you have spotted the letters 'T' and 'R' on the Control Image, these identify Effector Pinning. 'T' locks the Transform data (stops an unselected node moving) and 'R' locks the rotation of the specific node.



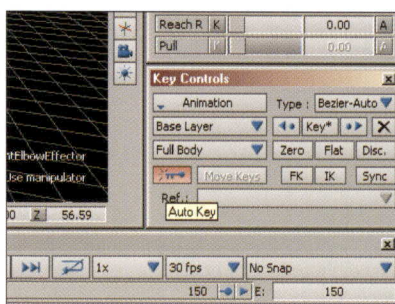
05 SAVE TIME: This instant procedure only worked so well because the character was set up carefully in the first place! By following the exact naming convention used in MotionBuilder, this character can easily be transferred back and forth between the two packages. Try to use this convention on future models to save a lot of time manually identifying each bone yourself!



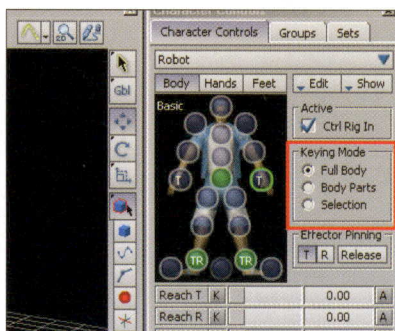
08 GIVE IT MOVEMENT: Right then, you now know how to move your character. To animate it, it's a simple case of moving to a new keyframe, moving a body part and then pressing 'K' (add a key). Simple! Alternatively, you can switch on AutoKey, which will apply a keyframe everytime you move something. We prefer to press the 'K' button. Those are the very basics; let's move on now to animating in a slightly different way, using a Pose system.

MAKE HIM EVEN PRETTIER

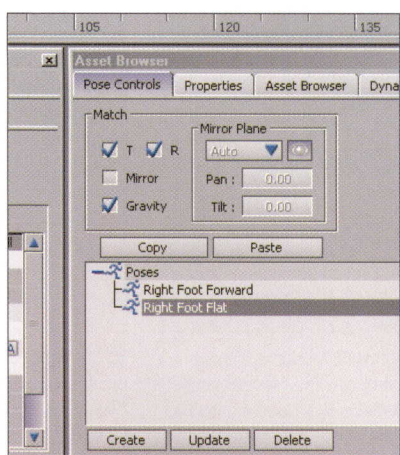
MotionBuilder's real-time engine works like a lot of game engines in the way it can handle real-time particles, cell-shading and reflections. To get them going you will want to look at the world of Shaders. In the Asset Browser window are sections for Materials and Shaders. The Materials are the base colour details for the shader itself, so select one and drag it onto any part of the robot. The viewport and navigator windows should update to show the robot part turn grey and the material details appear. Shift the sliders to change the colour of the material and its specularity. If you try to change the opacity or reflection it will tell you to use a shader. Select the Shader section in the Asset Browser. There is a wide variety to play with, which covers all sorts of effects from outlined cartoon styles to bump maps and particles. Grab the one that says Reflection and drag that onto the robot part. Select Append when it asks to add the effect to the Material. You now have a reflective (and refractive) shader. The Navigator panel should show the new options for reflections. Change the Reflection type to Spherical and then press the Generate button at the bottom to get a lovely, shiny, reflective effect!



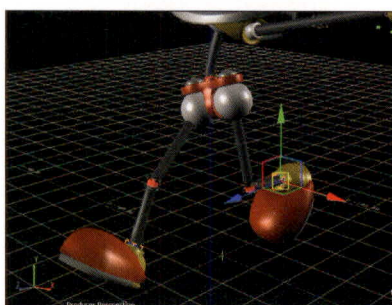
09 STRUT YOUR STUFF: The IK/FK rig has a simple, yet effective, Pose system that can be used to dramatically speed up animating every part of a character. We'll use it here to quickly create a walk cycle. So get ready to press 'K' repeatedly, or just turn the AutoKey on now.



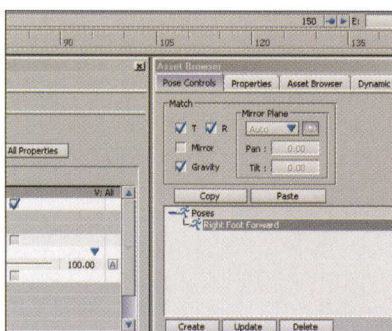
12 SHAKE THOSE HIPS: Anybody with a sense of movement will tell you that there's a lot in the hips, but we haven't got time to go into detail here. Just make sure the height is correct so the legs don't look stretched or squashed (you may need to turn off some Effector pinning to adjust this). Before we start posing, make sure that Keying mode in the Character Control panel is set to Full Body.



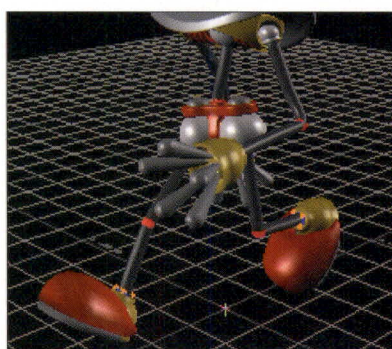
15 COMPLETE THE CYCLE: When you're happy with it, click on the Create Pose button again. Rename this pose Right Foot Flat, and then drag the Timeline to Frame 30 and turn on Mirror in the Pose Control window.



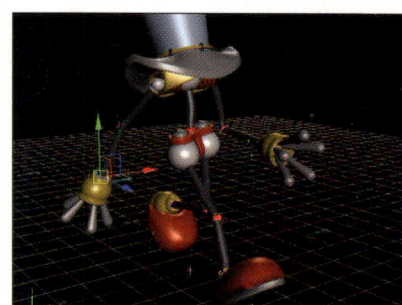
10 THE WALKING MOTION: We'll start by positioning the legs. The right foot will begin forward, just at the heel's point of contact with the ground, while the left foot should be back and on its ball with the heel up in the air and a bend in the knee.



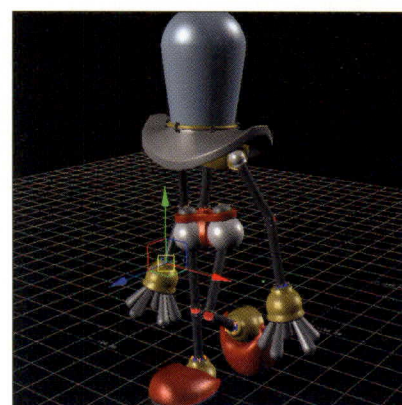
13 STRIKE A POSE: Now, go back down to the Asset Browser window and select the Pose Controls tab. Click on the Create button at the very bottom to store this whole body pose. It's a good idea to keep your poses labelled for when you need them later. So, right-click on where it says Robot Pose and rename it to Right Foot Forward. With that done we will work on our second pose.



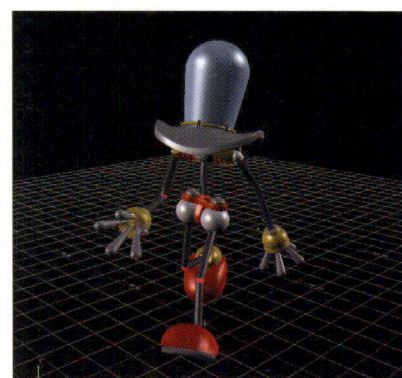
16 TAKIN' YOU BACK: Select the Right Foot Forward pose and press the Paste button. The pose will be applied but mirrored so that it is actually left foot forward. Now jump to Frame 45, select the Right Foot Flat pose and Paste that down. Finally, go to Frame 60, turn off the Pose Mirror button, select Right Foot forward again and select Paste to take the robot back to its start pose.



11 NOW TO THE ARMS: Swinging in the opposite directions to the feet, position the right hand behind the body and the left hand forward. Remember to place a keyframe after each body part is positioned otherwise when we go to move the Timeline everything will just pop back in to its default position.



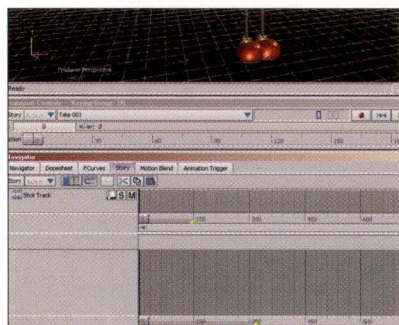
14 JUST RELAX: Go to Frame 15 and create the transition pose shown. The body is raised, so select the hip node to move the whole body up, but make sure the hands and feet aren't pinned. Then place the right foot flat on the ground while the left leg is bent. The hands should be either side of the body.



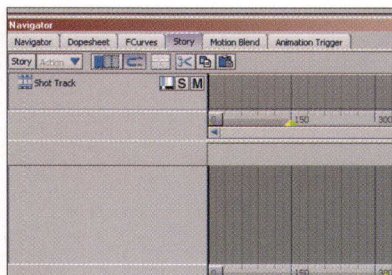
17 WALK THE WALK: Scrub the Timeline and you should see that the robot has a fairly basic walk cycle going. It has a lot of room for improvement but it shows you just how quick and easy the process can be in a package such as MotionBuilder. Right then, let's move on and get some really good movement going.

THINGS TO LEARN AND DO

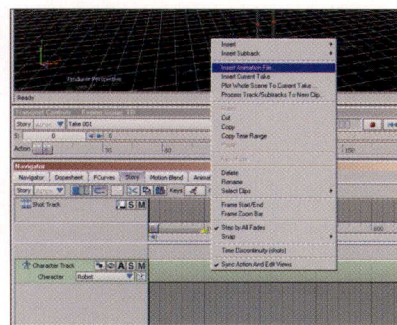
MotionBuilder is a very easy package to get the hang of and with a bit of luck you should have done so by the end of this tutorial. But it's also a very complex package when you get right in to the corners. So make sure you make the most of the included tutorials and video training that Alias does supply. If your thirst for knowledge continues try www.3dbuzz.com, they have an excellent array of video tutorials that will get you up to speed and a lot further in no time.



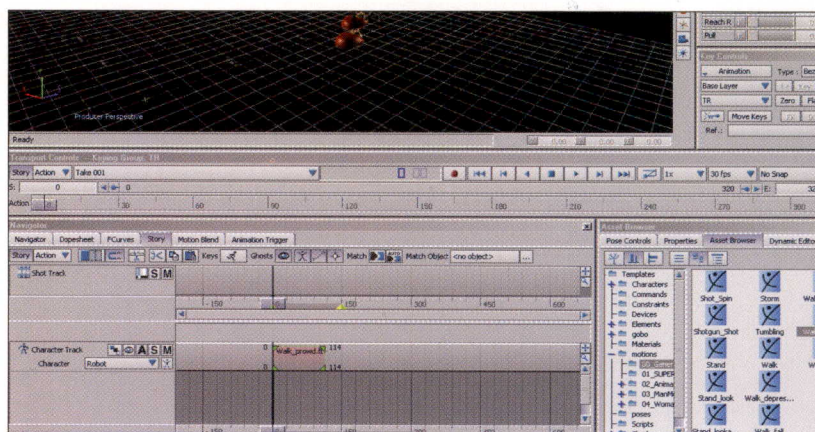
18 TIDYING UP: These dedicated roots for tidying up motion capture have held firm and it still is (possibly) the best tool on the market for handling mocap. So it makes sense to play with some and while we're at it take a look at the Story window.



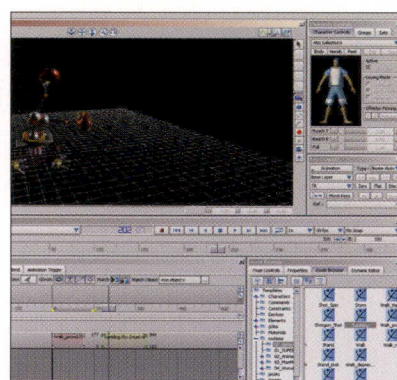
19 ALL RIGGED UP: Open the file 'MB_Part3_Start.fbx' from the cover disc; it's the robot again, all happily rigged (and now sporting a shiny dome). Click on the Navigator panel's Story tab. The Story area is a part of MotionBuilder that can be used to create entire narratives, stack movie and audio clips and, as in this case, blend motion capture.



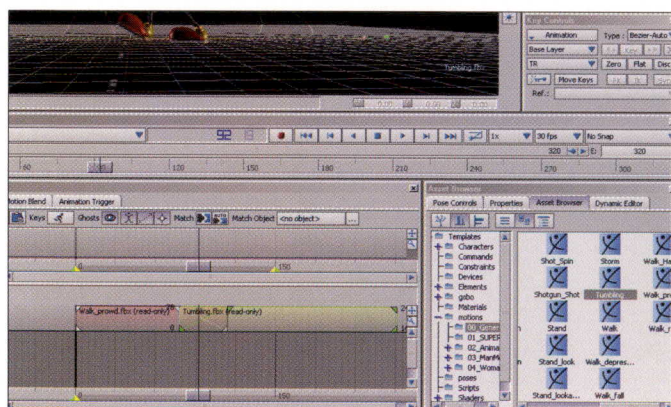
20 BRING IT IN: But first of all we need to make our character known. Right-click in the lower left part of the panel and select Insert/Character Animation Track. Now where it says Character click in the drop-down box and select our robot. Right-click on the bar to the right and select Insert Animation File.



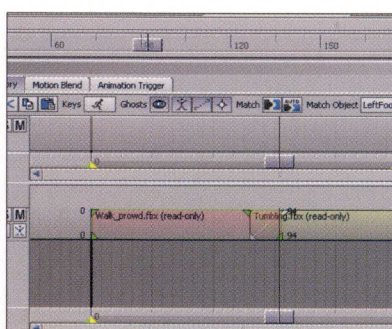
21 IN ACTION: Look on the cover disc again to find a file called 'WalkProud.fbx'; load it up and drag it so that its start point is at Frame 0 (this should also make the end point Frame 114). Now either press Play or drag the Timeline back and forth. You should get instant action, if nothing has happened then make sure Story is selected on the Transport Controls bar.



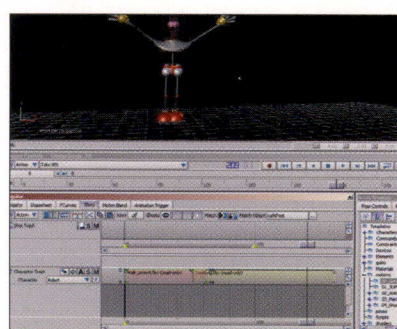
22 BUT LET'S ADD MORE: Right-click on the same bar and select Insert Animation File again. This time select 'Tumble.fbx'. If it is overlapping the Walk Proud clip then just drag it to one side for now. Scrub the Timeline and you will see the robot perform his jaunty walk before nipping back to the start and flipping.



23 JOIN UP THE TWO BITS: First of all we'll enable the ghosts. Ghosts are simple representations of the motion capture's skeletons, which will help us see where the two should meet. Click on the Eye icons to switch them on. Now drag the Tumbling clip back over the Walk Proud one. We want the Tumble to start at about Frame 78.



24 ALL IN THE BLEND: The overlap will cause a blend between the two moves but we want to shorten this transition so grab the end of WalkProud and drag it to Frame 94. Now to up the feet so the blend is fairly subtle. Luckily, MotionBuilder has a tool for this, select the 'WalkProud.fbx' move and click on the Match Options button at the top of the Story Window.



25 FINAL TOUCHES: Set the Left Foot to be the Match Object, Next Clip to the Match Clip and the Match Time to be At Start of Next Clip. Now when you hit OK MotionBuilder should have rearranged the motions to lead into each other. Hit Play to see the results. Now save this new motion to the robot by right-clicking the Story window and selecting 'Plot whole scene to current take'.

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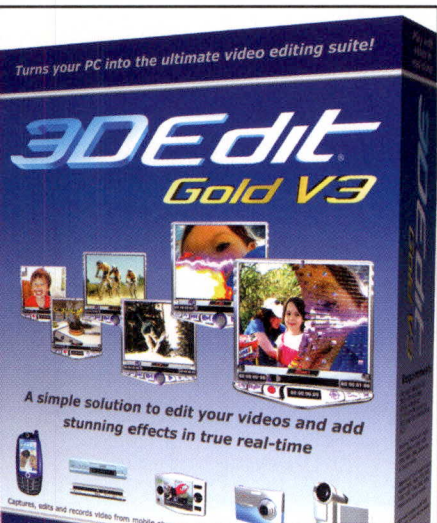
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Escape Studios graduate Matt Perry created this image in Maya™ after completing a 12-week intensive course. Escape is a primary source of talent, providing world-class training, software and recruitment. Find out more at www.escapestudios.co.uk.

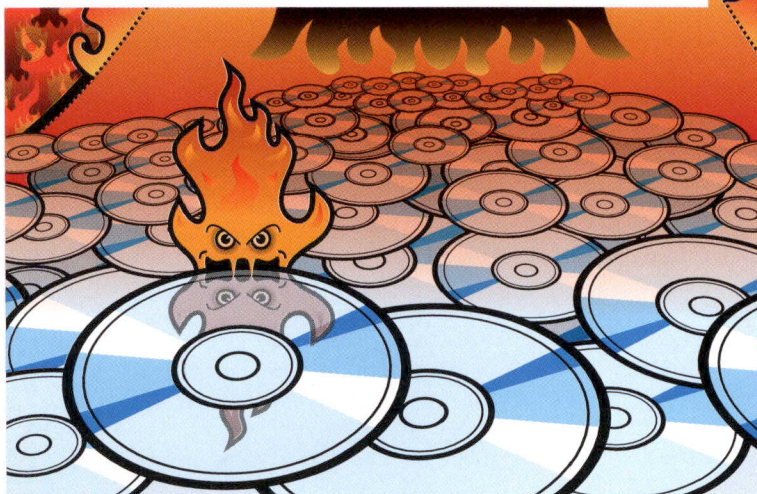
Reviews



100 Group Test

DVD Burners

So much great digital content; so little hard drive space. If that's your dilemma then flick on over to page 100, where we explore which DVD burner gives you the best results at the lowest price, and the fastest burns at the smoothest ride. Whether you want to archive your images or create professional showreels, these are the beasts you need to choose from



94 Tenomichi 3D Edit 3

There's a new way to edit in town, and it promises to harness your PC's CPU more efficiently than ever before to make rendering faster and smoother. We find out if it can really threaten the NLE big boys

96 HP Designjet 70

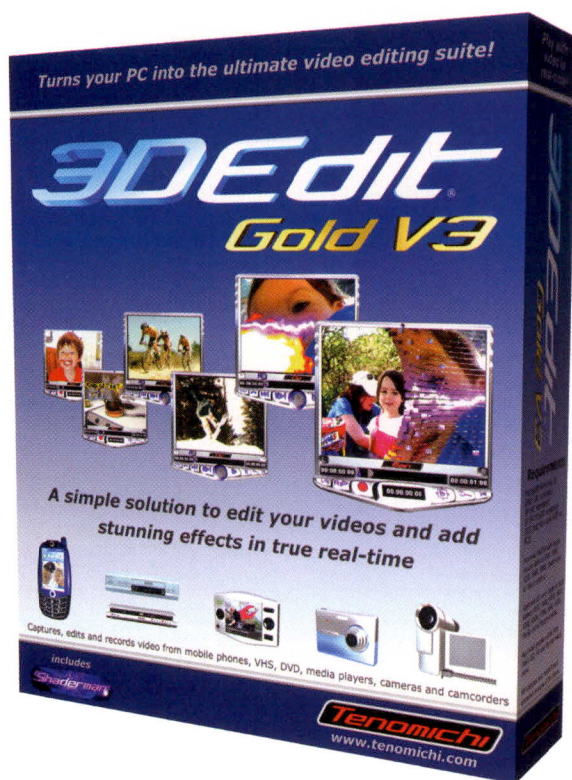
Graphic designers and illustrators who want real image quality and great colour reproduction at a reasonable price should look no further than here, as we size up the latest model from Hewlett Packard

98 Fujifilm F810 Zoom

Want megapixel power and the ability to shoot underwater? We explore the hidden depths of this new moderately priced camera from Fuji, and let you know our findings - all so you know whether it's worth purchasing or not

TENOMICHI 3D EDIT V3

Harnessing the power of your graphics card for instant effects rendering, does this new editing tool herald a new age for DV moviemakers?



For those who are new to the world of digital video editing, a cursory flick through the editing pages here in *DCA* might be enough to suggest that trimming, splicing, correcting and outputting movies on a computer requires the use of particularly complicated software. Indeed, squint at a screenshot of Apple Final Cut Pro or Adobe Premiere Pro and you'll no doubt notice a rather intimidating interface, packed full of buttons, menus, tools and features that, at first glance, can look really quite frightening.

Like most high-end creative software, these editing suites pack a huge amount of power behind their rather drab interfaces, and it can take quite some time before a user is confident enough to flick through the controls at speed to achieve the desired results. However, while the developers at the top end of the market take steps to streamline the controls of their editing tools and ease workflow with each new release, there's few changes in terms of layout. So, in the pursuit of editing simplicity, it often pays

"THE MOST ASTONISHING THING IS THAT THE INTERFACE, AS WITH EVERYTHING IN 3D EDIT, IS DRAWN ENTIRELY BY THE COMPUTER'S GRAPHICS CARD"

to look elsewhere. With this in mind, it's pretty clear that Tenomichi's new release 3D Edit Gold V3 is intended to revitalise the scene with a marked step towards a more dynamic and user-friendly method of video editing.

In fact, just one look at the interface in these screenshots should be enough to convince that the developers have gone all-out to fashion an editing suite that stands out from the crowd, by virtue of a completely unique and stylised set of controls. There are no dull, grey menus and buttons to be found here; and no tiny, fiddly sliders and dials either. Instead, what you'll find assailing your screen is a heady mix of sculpted panels, unusual windows and large, almost Fisher Price-like keys sporting a mixture of plain-English labels and rather abstract icons. Quite a change from the norm, we'll think you'll agree.

APPEARANCES IS EVERYTHING
But perhaps the most astonishing thing about all this is that the interface, as with everything in 3D Edit, is drawn entirely by the computer's graphics card. Touted as the most revolutionary aspect of the program, on-chip rendering means that not only is the interface fluid, dynamic

and customisable, but also the software enables users to apply full-screen transitions and special effects to clips on the fly without having to stop and wait for time-consuming bouts of rendering.

In terms of speeding up workflow, this certainly proves a great benefit. To apply an effect (or 'Shader', as Tenomichi likes to call it) to a clip, drag the footage into the Clip monitor, press the Shader button on the main string of controls in the centre of the screen, and then select from a list of effects from the left-hand browser window. The Shader will then be immediately applied to the footage, and you then have control over various parameters to customise the effect to your liking. Finally, press the Play button and you can view the clip, complete with effects in place, in all its full-screen glory. And the best bit is that this entire process takes but a few seconds.

Of course, these on-chip rendering techniques do put various limitations on the type of computer that can run 3D Edit. Put simply, if your machine is not sporting a dedicated graphics card from a catalogue of compatible models (see www.tenomichi.com for a complete list), the software will refuse to even boot up. The good news, however, is that most

SPECIFICATIONS

Tenomichi 3D Edit Gold V3

CONTACT: 01582 883152
PRICE [Inc VAT]: £63.95
URL: www.tenomichi.com

OPERATING SYSTEMS: PC
SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS: PC
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128Mb RAM
64Mb Hard drive space
Compatible DX9 graphics card

FINDING YOUR WAY AROUND

TIRED OF SLOGGING THROUGH THE DULL, GREY INTERFACES OF STANDARD VIDEO EDITING SUITES? COME WITH US ON A TOUR OF 3D EDIT'S MORE STYLISH CONTROLS

1. CLIP WINDOW

You can load a clip into the window by dragging footage directly onto the Clip window, clicking on an item on the Timeline, or selecting a file in the Browser. Playback controls line the bottom of the window

2. BROWSER

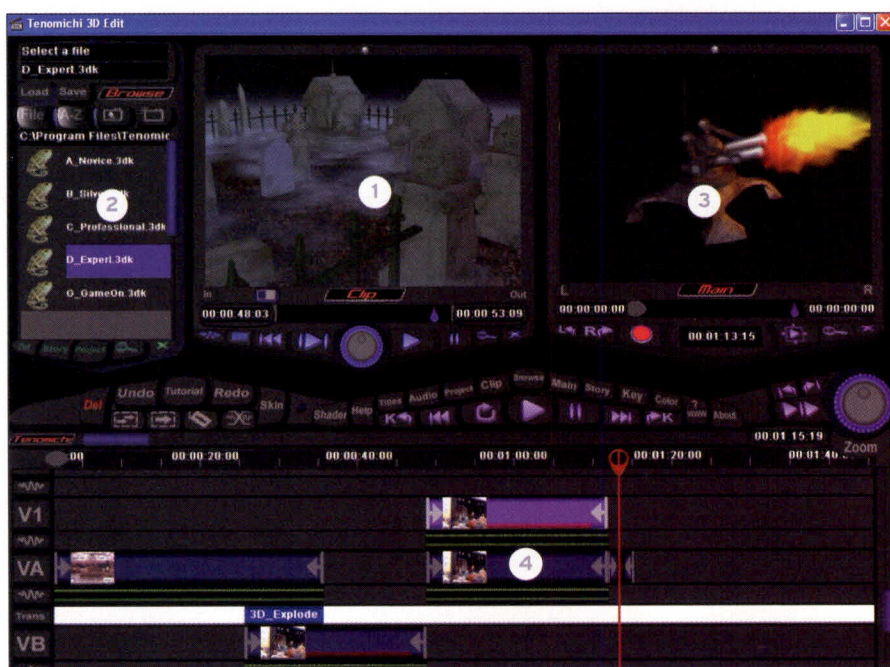
Situated over in the left-hand side of the interface, the Browser window enables you to access a number of different items. You can use it to import clips, save, browse and select Shaders

3. MAIN WINDOW

The Main window is where you can preview the project. Press the Play button and the Playhead will run across the Timeline, displaying the movie complete with effects and transitions in place

4. THE TIMELINE

Running across the bottom of the interface, the Timeline is where you'll arrange your movie footage, sound effects and transitions. And dragging the Playhead gives you a real-time preview of scenes too



"WHILE EFFECTS RENDERING IS CLEARLY EXTREMELY FAST, THE SHADERS THEMSELVES LEAVE RATHER A LOT TO BE DESIRED"

modern cards from competing manufacturers ATI and nVidia (currently the two most dominant graphics card developers in the home market) are supported, so if your computer is packing a Radeon or GeForce card, chances are your system will meet 3D Edit's demands.

STYLE OVER SUBSTANCE?

So, it's in the area of 3D innovation that 3D Edit holds most of its cards, but the question of whether the program actually offers a viable and flexible editing environment still remains to be addressed. And sadly, the answer is: not really. Although the software enables users to import footage from a range of digital video recorders via a built-in capture tool; arrange clips on a Timeline sporting six video channels and 12 stereo audio tracks; and edit 16x9 widescreen footage in a dedicated, resized interface;

the fact is that the program's boasted on-chip rendering actually causes more problems than it seeks to solve. While effects rendering is clearly extremely fast, the shaders themselves leave rather a lot to be desired. If you're thinking that 3D Edit will harness the complete power of your cutting-edge graphics card to deliver Hollywood-quality visuals, think again; instead, you get to employ fairly simplistic clichés like flame, electricity, posterize and swirl - that all look pretty basic. Although there are some interesting effects like half-tone, colour correction and a rudimentary chroma key filter, there's simply not enough here to really set your creativity soaring.

In addition, the rendered interface and controls bring with them their own set of problems. Firstly, the over-large buttons and dials do not, in practice, feel intuitive to use, and they lend the program an

overall air of imprecision when you're working on trimming a clip or arranging sequences. Secondly, simple activities such as moving the clip windows and browser panels that line the top of the screen can quickly cause quite severe on-screen corruption, with overlapping videos behaving erratically and buttons from windows beneath the stack that often show through onto the controls. In our opinion, it would have been far better to leave them fixed in place, with the user unable to manually adjust their position beyond few limited, snappable options.

In all, 3D Edit is a bit of a mixed bag. While it offers a range of innovations, it's still a fairly simplistic and restrictive editing tool in practice. Advanced moviemakers will find little here of interest, although beginners may find the quick and easy approach a bit simpler to stomach and get to grips with. **DCA**

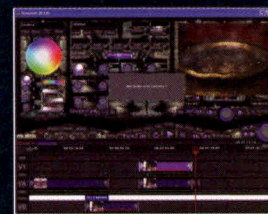
IN DEPTH:

THE ON-CHIP INTERFACE IS A CURIOUS BEAST



ZOOMED PLAYBACK

When you're working on an intricate scene, just hit the magnifying glass icon at the bottom of the Clip or Main windows and the video will expand to a far larger size



CORRECTION FILTERS

Here, the colour correction filter can be controlled by either dragging the colour selector on the colour palette, or by tweaking the dials in the Shaderman control panel



RENDERED TRANSITIONS

Because 3D Edit renders through your graphics card, it's good for transitions. Here, the 3D Explode transition is in full flow, and results can be previewed in real-time

DCA VERDICT

GOOD: Beginner-friendly, fast editing tools and real-time effects rendering speed up workflow

BAD: Interface glitches, poor effects and simplistic feel put this in the 'novices only' category



HP DESIGNJET 70

HP's latest cut-price large-format printer is here. Does its low price reflect a lack of features, or does it offer true value for money for the cash-strapped graphic designer? We move in for a closer look



Digital Creative Arts
BEST BUY
★★★★

SPECIFICATIONS

HP Designjet 70

CONTACT: 0845270 4000
PRICE (Inc VAT): £730
URL: www.hp.com/uk

OPERATING SYSTEMS: PC/MAC
SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS: PC
Windows 98 or higher
Pentium I processor or higher
48Mb RAM

SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS: MAC
Mac OS 9.1 or OS X 10.2
G3 processor or higher
256Mb RAM

PAPER SIZE: A2, A3, A4, B3, B4, Roll
MAX RESOLUTION: 1,200 x 600 dpi
ONBOARD MEMORY: 64Mb
CONNECTIVITY: USB/Parallel
DIMENSIONS: 890 x 415 x 220mm
WEIGHT: 18.5kg

After you've spent an age grafting away in Photoshop or Illustrator in the pursuit of the perfect image, the final hurdle to overcome is turning your digital design into a high-quality hard copy. For many artists, this is the most tiresome and hair-pulling moment of the design process, and all too often those tiny details that you've been painstakingly perfecting onscreen can get

noticed in an interview is to get together a collection of large-scale prints in your portfolio. And for this, you're going to need a large-scale printer.

In days of yore, printers that could handle page sizes of A3 and A2 cost ridiculous amounts of money, meaning they could only be afforded by already successful artists with suitably fat wallets. However, to its credit, leading

your monitor or out of the way on a shelf beneath your desk. Instead, this printer will require its own tabletop with space available at both the front and the rear for attaching accessories like the paper tray and (optional) roll feeder. And with the printer weighing in at a whopping 18.5kg, you'll need to make sure that it's mounted on a secure platform that won't baulk at prolonged load bearing.

Although aesthetics are not the most important aspect of any printer, it's good to note that HP has gone to some lengths to make the huge Designjet 70 a bearable addition to your studio. It's unusual shape boasts curvy contours that help take your mind off its overall greyness, and a spin-off benefit of its sleek design is increased ease of use. On-board controls are minimal, with the printer offering a streamlined control panel that presents an ink level indicator and status monitor on a large LCD, while just three buttons enable you to directly control power, print cancel and form feed. Requiring no less than four separate ink cartridges (namely cyan, magenta, yellow and black), the Designjet 70 has been designed with running costs in mind. Although it's initially expensive to kit out the printer with ink at the beginning of a run, individual cartridges can be purchased as

"HP HAS GONE TO SOME LENGTHS TO MAKE THE HUGE DESIGNJET 70 A BEARABLE ADDITION TO YOUR STUDIO"

lost as the image makes its way onto paper. Colours can look dull, textures can turn out flat and boring, and deft contrasts can be obliterated if your printer is not up to the job, which is sadly the case with many standard desktop printers on the market right now.

So, if you want to give your work the chance it deserves, it's crucial to kit out your studio with a pro-quality printer that's focused on delivering impeccable results fast. However, while high-resolution A4 printers are currently pretty cost effective, any designer will tell you that the best way to get your work

printer manufacturer HP has been actively developing comparatively low-cost solutions that are more within the grasp of the enthusiast market. And so it is that we welcome the latest super-sized HP printer, the Designjet 70.

STEPPING UP TO THE PLATE

Boasting the capacity to print on a range of media up to a size of A2+, this is a printer aimed squarely at the graphic design market. And as you'd expect, it's absolutely enormous. Measuring in at a massive 890x415x220mm, this isn't a printer that you can tuck candidly behind



● Flat artwork, such as vectors, are reproduced accurately with strong definition



● Photos look okay, although blacks are a bit weak

and when necessary to ensure that further expenditure is kept to a minimum. In addition, the printer requires four individual print heads that can be replaced separately should one wear out. On the whole, it's a flexible system and helps cement the printer as a cost-effective option for those without the budget to keep on replacing expensive multi-colour cartridges.

PERFORMANCE MATTERS

The Designjet 70 proved highly efficient during our tests. We thrashed the printer pretty hard, sending page after page of full-scale, full-colour graphics to the machine throughout the day, and we were pleased to note that the ink reservoirs only dropped one notch. In addition, we were equally impressed with the printer's reliability. We loaded the paper tray with a variety of paper sizes, including A4, A3 and A2, and not once did we have to pause printing to sort out a troublesome paper jam or incorrect spool. This really is a printer you can just



● Image detail is impressive in all prints, and you'll find that your textures are crisp and well defined

set up and leave running unattended, safe in the knowledge that your print job will be delivered without incident.

Setting up the printer is actually pretty straightforward, despite its large dimensions. On the front-right of the printer, a double-hinged panel gives access to the cartridge mounts. Once

you're done, close the panel and wait 12 minutes while the printer initialises the new print heads, and it's ready to go.

To fully test its capabilities we sent a number of different images through the printer and scrutinised the results. Since it's aimed primarily at the graphic design market, it's little surprise to find that the

"THIS IS A PRINTER YOU CAN SET UP AND LEAVE RUNNING, SAFE IN THE KNOWLEDGE YOUR PRINT JOB WILL BE DELIVERED"

raised up, the reservoirs slot easily into runners, and there is even an expanded slot for the black cartridge to enable you to purchase a larger-capacity version if you plan on printing a high number of black and white or greyscale pages.

With the cartridges installed, flip the panel up another notch and the print head mounts are revealed. Again, there's one head for each cartridge, and they are installed in exactly the same way. When

printer performed best when reproducing the flat colours and clean lines of vector artwork. However, performance dropped a tad when printing photos, with blacks looking slightly blotchy.

In all, we found the Designjet 70 a good option for those looking to pick up a large-format printer. Furthermore, with a price tag of well under £800, the Designjet 70 certainly offers great value for money as well. **DCA**

IN DEPTH:

THE DESIGNJET UP CLOSE AND PERSONAL



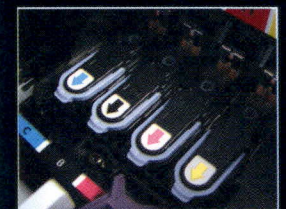
THE CONTROL PANEL

Three buttons give instant access to form feed, power and print cancelling features, and a large, monochrome LCD displays ink reservoir levels, as well as current printer status



INSTALLING CARTRIDGES

The Designjet 70's ink cartridges are installed by flipping up the hinged front-right panel. Here, four cartridges can be quickly slotted into place



PRINT HEADS

You install four separate print heads, or one for each cartridge. Again, these slot into place in the mounting that's revealed by further lifting the cartridge cover

DCA VERDICT

GOOD: Delivers great results for flat, vector-style artwork; easy to set-up and use; quiet and reliable

BAD: Photo results are a little disappointing, with blacks sometimes appearing blotchy



FUJI FINEPIX F810 ZOOM

Fuji says the F810 is perfect for the camera enthusiast with quality in mind. Read on, as we zoom in to find out what that means

Digital
CreativeArts
RECOMMENDS
★★★★★



To do well as a camera manufacturer, you have to cover all the markets and sell to a number of different consumer demographics. You need to keep your professionals content, just as you need to satisfy the snap-happy tourist. With the F810, Fuji aims to corner the top end of the enthusiast market (and up), as it boasts advanced features, a compact housing and a reasonable price.

At the moment, this is one of the best cameras you can buy for under £300. While not as small as the F410 and similar models, the F810 isn't really trying to be the smallest or the lightest camera out there. Instead, value and quality are its goals. If the proof of the pudding is in the eating, then it's not about what the camera looks like anyway, but about how it performs under pressure.

First impressions are often deceiving; and the F810 is full of such misconceptions. For a start, it looks heavy but is light; secondly, it looks like a compact camera but is capable of 6 effective megapixels. This gives you 12 recorded megapixels, as

Fujifilm has a different way of counting pixels than other cameras do. However you look at it, the Super CCD HR sensor gives great quality. The design is robust enough, and it's comfortable to hold, plus the rectangular shape is a nice change from the boxy lower-end models. Unusually, it feels natural to use the viewfinder.

BE IN CONTROL

The controls are simple to use, with a handy wheel sitting on top of the camera that allows swift shifts between shooting modes. Another step up from the standard design is the lens, which offers a more effective 4x optical zoom than previous models and reduces the need to use the often unreliable digital zoom facility. Once you've taken your photo, the widescreen shows off images beautifully and the menus - always very good on Fuji cameras

- are some of the easiest to use that we've seen. Unlike some cameras that sacrifice start-up times for a larger lens, the F810 is ready to go less than two seconds after it is switched on. Following on from the F710 model, the widescreen function is also present in the F810 and allows the photographer to capture images and videos that do not need to be stretched or altered to fit when displayed on widescreen devices. The F810 is also one of the handful of cameras in the Fuji range that has an underwater housing especially designed for it. While also being a lot of fun to play with, this is a remarkable tool capable of taking some stunning photography. At around £140 it's not cheap, but with buttons specifically oversized for underwater use, anything you can alter outside the casing can be done underwater as well.

If we were picky, we'd say the F810 could be a little taller to give the user a little more control, and having to pop the flash up manually is also a bit of a drag. We also noticed a bit of a blur if hands are less than steady, although this is thankfully rare and only occurs in certain shooting modes. This should in no way detract from the exceptional capabilities and standout performance of this camera, however, and it has more professional features than your average enthusiasts' camera and excellent output too. Even the professionals wouldn't be ashamed to be seen with the F810, and neither should you. **DCA**



IN DEPTH:

FIND OUT WHAT'S HOT TO TROT ON THE NEW F810



WIDE LOAD

It's great to have a wide LCD screen to view your photos on, but at the flick of a switch you can also take widescreen shots in video or photo modes - the flexibility is a great touch



SUB AQUA SNAPPER

With the underwater housing (available separately and for more cash), incredible photos can be taken, perfect for slightly different photo shoots or for capturing aquatic life

SPECIFICATIONS

Fuji Finepix F810 Zoom

CONTACT:	0207 586 1477
PRICE [Inc VAT]:	£299.99
URL:	www.fuji.co.uk
RECORDED MEGAPIXELS:	12.31
EFFECTIVE MEGAPIXELS:	6.3
OPTICAL ZOOM:	4x
FOCAL LENGTH:	32.5-130mm
MAX RESOLUTION:	2,848 x 2,136
ISO RANGE:	80-800
STORAGE:	16MB XD Picture Card
DIMENSIONS:	109.5 x 54 x 29mm
WEIGHT:	200g

DCA VERDICT

GOOD: Great specs and a great price that ensures excellent value for a wide range of photographers

BAD: Some may not like the shape of the camera and the flash button is a little annoying

★★★★★

WEB PAGES MADE EASY IS CHANGING...



Great new look. On sale 25th August

DCA GROUP TEST

SONY DRX-720UL ● HP DVD640E ● LG 16X SUPER MULTI ● SAMSUNG TS-E552 ● FRECOM FX-50 ● LITE-ON 1653SX

EXTERNAL

DVD BURNERS

Backing up large amounts of data is best done on DVD and with a DVD burner; find a suitable one for your needs with our latest group test

HOW WE TEST:

With DVD burners, speed is obviously the most important factor potential buyers are going to be considering. With dual-layer drives now handling 8.5Gb per disc, you don't want to be waiting hours for each DVD to complete. For testing purposes, we utilised Nero CD-DVD Speed, a freeware benchmark tool that checks every aspect of a drive, from the time it takes to spin up initially, to the maximum, average and starting speed of a dual-layer burn.

As well as running the read tests with a commercial CD and DVD-ROM disc, every drive was put through its paces with CD-DVD speed's write tests, which fill a disc to capacity and record the statistics. Each write test was completed using 16x DVD-R, 16x DVD+R, DVD+R DL and a CD-R media. It's important to note that the speeds quoted by manufacturers are recorded under ideal conditions and in real-world use, you'll very rarely hit the maximum limits of a drive as it depends on a whole host of conditions, from compatibility with the media to the speed of the interface in question.

We also looked at the software and accessories each drive offered and overall value for money. Many of us will already own disc burning software, but it's good to know that you're getting a newer application bundled with the drive. And although aesthetics were considered, it was the build quality of the drives that was most important.

Illustration by Philip Weyman
(www.misterphil.co.uk)



SONY DRX-720UL

It was certainly designed with looks in mind, but does performance impress as well?

As DVD burners go, the reassuringly solid DRX-720UL isn't a bad looking piece of kit and its smooth plastic body will sit nicely alongside an Apple Mac. Like Sony's Playstation2 console, they've designed it to be placed on its side using the included stand or in the more traditional horizontal position. Not as much fun as a PS2 when sat next to your telly of course, but at least in the vertical position you've got a good chance of finding room for it in a cluttered workspace.

The backplate has the usual array of connections with a standard USB2, a USB2 miniport, FireWire, power socket and power switch. The eject button is placed on the side of the unit (or top, when it's vertical), which will cause a moment of pause for anyone used to stabbing a button on the front of drives. There are no external controls for playing audio discs, which is a minor disappointment, but we also failed to locate a manual eject hole, which is a little more disconcerting. If it's there, it's well hidden.

Both USB2 and FireWire leads are packaged inside the box, alongside a sturdy transparent stand for the drive and a packet with software disc and instruction manuals. The disc contains a copy of the Nero 6 suite, which is as comprehensive a tool as you're likely to find, capable of all manner of nifty tricks. The basic application will handle all your data, video and music needs and would probably be enough for most of us, but it's accompanied by an array of tools for editing and creating video discs and photo slideshows, among others. The manual takes you through the installation step-by-step in a methodical way and gets you started with Nero, but beyond a few tips it won't help if things go seriously wrong. There is a manual on the software disc, but as with most hardware these days, tech support lines are your next stop if you have a disaster. Fingers crossed it doesn't happen.

When it came to burning and reading discs, the results were disappointingly pedestrian. The 720UL managed just 6.8x average for reading DVDs and 7.7 average for burning both DVD+/-R. CDs were better at an average 29.9x. It's difficult to justify its relatively high cost with such a lacklustre performance, though, so you may find that this particular drive does not hold all the answers you're looking for.

DCA VERDICT

★★

GOOD: Nicely designed, and certainly contains a strong bundle of software, which is headed up by the excellent Nero suite that's included

BAD: Average performance gives this drive no real advantage over the cheaper options currently available on the market



HP DVD640E

Support for the unique LightScribe technology is a plus, but is it enough?

HP's business-like 640e is certainly the most action-packed drive on test here. In addition to dealing with the usual CD and DVD formats, it also features the new LightScribe labelling technology. This is a fancy new way of getting text and pictures onto the surface of discs without messing around using inkjet printers or sticky labels.

If you're lucky enough to track down some elusive LightScribe blank media, the drive's laser can burn any design you provide directly onto the special coating of the discs. The downside is that LightScribe currently only supports monochrome (with colour several years away), and that the label will eventually fade. Plus, the media is not only expensive but also difficult to locate. It's a nice feature to have but until the discs become commonplace and prices fall into line with the cost of standard blank media, it's going to remain a niche. Still, that's not to say the 640e has nothing else to recommend it. For one thing, the software package is generous, including Sonic Record Now, PowerDVD, Arcsoft Showbiz and several labelling tools for LightScribe. There is little covered there that Nero isn't capable of, but PowerDVD is welcome, since it's the premier DVD video application for PCs. The manuals hold scant information, simply telling you how to install the drive, how to use LightScribe and where to go for help when things turn bad.

The drive itself feels sturdy enough, though. It could be stood on its side but doesn't appear to have been designed for it, so you risk knocking it over unfortunately. We found that the four plastic feet on the bottom of the unit offered little in the way of grip, so you'd need to be careful that it doesn't get pushed off the back of a desk, which could happen all too easily. The front panel does not have a play button or volume control, but unlike the Sony model there is a manual eject hole.

Unfortunately, the HP's performance didn't stand up too well in our tests, on-par with the Sony DRX-720UL. Although an average 7.7x DVD burn (on both + and - media) isn't terrible, most of the other drives managed an 8x or 9x. CDs were handled better with 28.34x average CD-R write that topped out at its rated maximum of 40x. A bit of a mixed experience with this one; not the worst on the market by any means, but there's better out there.

DCA VERDICT

★★★

GOOD: Well designed and includes a strong package, in terms of software. LightScribe could be a definite plus

BAD: During testing we found the burn speeds to be very average. LightScribe certainly won't appeal to everyone either



LG 16X SUPER MULTI

A multi-format support capability is great, and the hopes are high for this one

It's a throw-up between LG and the Sony 720UL for best looking drive, since the LG is decked out in smooth white livery that'll prove a tempting prospect for Apple Mac owners, and probably PC users for that matter. We're pretty happy with the feel of the LG. Its sleek body looks great and feels tough and the whole unit has a strong build quality, at least, nothing creaked or bowed when we squeezed it, which is always a good sign.

The Super Multi is roughly the same size as HP's 640e, but with a superior design that lets you stand the drive vertically without too much concern about it hitting the deck, achieved by slapping some rubber on its ridged sides. Simple, but it works. Rubber feet on the bottom also help it stay put on a desk when horizontal. Once again, there are no external audio buttons to play with on the front, just the eject switch and a manual eject hole. The rear panel holds two 1394 FireWire ports, a USB2 and a power socket. The power switch is a little small though, and fiddly to get to if the drive's hidden away. The dual 1394 ports are for 'daisy chaining' FireWire devices, in case you're running short of ports on your system, and are both identical - it makes no difference which you choose. The box contents are standard, one USB2, one FireWire, manual and software disc.

The software disc isn't too bad, however. Nero Express and InCD provide burning duties, but it's a slimmed down version of the full package, which does the basics and little else. PowerDVD is back once again though, along with PowerProducer Gold, a simple but reasonably effective video and slideshow production tool. LG also provide us with Nero BackItUp, which does exactly what you'd expect. As with most of these tools, it offers rudimentary functions that'll likely suit the backup needs of most casual users. The LG's claim to fame is its support for DVD-RAM, but it's debatable how much use this is going to be to anyone now. DVD-RAM media is slower and more expensive and the most likely use is for anyone who still has one of the early DVD TV recorders that used that format. Still, it's a welcome addition when most drives can't even read DVD-RAM. The LG manages some decent scores on our tests, burning a CD at an average 32x and reading a DVD at 10x. Standard DVD+/-R tests were a little average at just over 8x.

DCA VERDICT

★★★★

GOOD: Dual FireWire and DVD-RAM support could be great extras for some, and it's a nice looking drive with good figures - the bundled software isn't bad either

BAD: If you don't need DVD-RAM or dual-FireWire there's little reason to choose this over the Lite-On option



SAMSUNG TS-E552

A robust model this certainly is, but we want to know what it's capable of

Not the most common or popular make when it comes to DVD burners, but Samsung nonetheless has an excellent reputation for consumer electronics. In fact, Samsung has been called 'the new Sony' and is well known for being a comfortable brand. That is, we may not go out of our way to own a Samsung DVD burner, but we'll be happy to buy one anyway.

Perhaps Samsung had extreme sports in mind when it came up with the E552, because the chunky exterior appears to be armoured against natural hazards, just in case you drop it down the side of Mount Everest. Maybe not a great looking drive, but it certainly feels tough. The ridges along the sides do stop it from standing vertically, however. Nothing out of the ordinary on the front panel, just the round, backlit eject button and an eject hole. Unlike most of the drives here, the Samsung only has a USB2 interface on the rear, which doesn't make it the best choice for Apple Mac users.

The package contents are scant; a USB2 lead, power adapter, software disc and a slip of paper that shows how to install the drive. Amusingly, the guide demonstrates how to install the driver files for Windows 98 users with the included CD. What you're supposed to do if you don't already have an optical drive - not completely unlikely if you're running such an old system - is never explained. The software disc contains Pinnacle Instant CD/DVD 8 and an online manual. While Instant CD/DVD is competent and fine for basic use, it's not as comprehensive as Nero or Easy CD; it'll perform most necessary functions but just isn't as up-to-date as the packages bundled with other drives. Admittedly, the Samsung is on the cheaper end of the scale so it's not surprising that the software isn't quite up to the standard set by others, but the LG and HP are only about £5 more.

It scored well in our disc burning and read tests, with a good 10x DVD read, 30x CD read, 8.15x for DVD-R and 8.93x for DVD+R. For a low-cost drive, these are some good figures, but we encountered two failures using DVD+R DL media before a successful dual-layer burn, with an average speed of 2.4x. If it wasn't for the Lite-On, we'd be recommending the Samsung to anyone on a budget; both are very close, but the Lite-On has a superior software bundle for £10 less.

DCA VERDICT

★★★

GOOD: Good read and burn speeds for a cheap drive and it is certainly worth purchasing if you're on a budget

BAD: Bundled software isn't great and the price could do with being a notch lower - some problems with dual-layer burns too



FREECOM FX-50

Both PC and Mac users are going to like what this drive has to offer...

Freecom has a long history with external drives, as the company started in 1989 with the specific aim of providing user-friendly external optical drives. Since then, it's successfully gained a following in this crowded market with an excellent reputation for its wide variety of storage devices. The FX-50 is its current top-of-the-line external drive and has a price tag to match - at almost £100, it's more expensive than any other drive here.

What's good to note is that the FX-50's package is, taken on its own, better value than the bundles of any other drive we looked at. As well as the usual USB2 and FireWire leads, you get an additional FireWire cable (like the LG, this drive has dual-FireWire) and some blank media, a DVD+R and a CD-R. The software also is particularly good, with a copy of Roxio Media Creator 7 for PC and Toast for Mac OS. Creator 7 is one of the best all-in-one media tools around and a great addition to this package. It contains fully-featured image, video and audio editors, as well as tools for backup, CD and DVD creation and disc copying. As long as you don't start needing high-end pro video-editing facilities or disc authoring applications, Creator 7 offers everything you could want in one package. The fact that it cost £99 when first released no doubt contributes to the high price of this drive. Toast is the Mac equivalent of Easy CD and is likely to be familiar to many of you, as it's the most popular disc burning application for Apple Mac OS. Freecom was the only company to include software specifically for Apple computers, which is something we appreciate. The drive itself isn't the best looking model we've ever seen, but we've got no complaints about the build quality. Our only quibble is the lack of a power switch.

The FX-50 had an impressive performance overall. DVD read speeds averaged at just over 10x, with CD reads averaging at around 30x, peaking at close to 40x. Both + and - DVD media was burnt at around 9x. Dual layer burns were normal at 2.4x.

While the FX-50 is pricey, it's fantastic value if you don't already own the necessary applications - both PC and Mac users will be pleased with the software bundle and performance offered. If you've got software already however, there are better deals.

DCA VERDICT

★★★★★

GOOD: Excellent software bundle for both PC and Mac; a reliable drive with a strong overall performance that impressed

BAD: It's expensive in comparison to the others, especially if you already own adequate media creation software



LITE-ON 1653SX

First impressions can often be deceptive, as this moderately-priced burner proves

Lite-On has a strong reputation when it comes to DVD burners, mainly because of its budget prices, drive reliability and the fact that they can be easily modified for region-free operation. The company first set-up shop in 1995 and the Taipei-based company has gone from strength to strength since. The 1653SX is the external version of Lite-On's popular 1653S. It's a squat package that's less bulky than any of the other drives, which will make it a little easier to carry around. It can also be placed vertically using the included stand, so if you're really pushed for space it's not going to be a problem finding a small gap for it. The drive's design is simple; much like the HP 640e, it'll fit nicely into an office environment.

As usual, the exterior casing feels solid but like the Freecom it lacks an external power switch. This isn't ideal because you need to unplug it to power down. The 1653SX is the only drive to include a headphone socket and volume control so you can play audio CDs. It supports most of the standards, with the exception of DVD-RAM, which is a rarity anyway. The region control is configured to region 2 by default and can be changed five times, sticking with the last setting that's chosen, but Lite-On drives can often be unlocked using firmware updates or third-party tools.

Unsurprisingly for such a low-cost burner, the package is minimal. You get a USB cable to hook it up of course, but there is no blank media. The software disc contains Nero Express 6, Nerovision Express and Nero BackItUp. Lite-On has also included the Nero MPEG-2 DVD plug-in though, so you can view DVD movies if you don't already have commercial software.

For being the cheapest drive on test we expected to see a performance that reflected the cost, but instead it put in a fairly strong effort, with excellent CD read speeds of 30x, occasionally hitting 40x, and DVD write speeds of between 8x and 9x. We did notice some big fluctuations with the DVD read and DVD+R write tests however, with the CD speed graphs showing sudden drops before the drive recovered, but this doesn't appear to have impacted upon the average read speed, which was 7.5x for DVD-ROMs. The Lite-On may not be the fastest drive around, but it's not the slowest either and all the basic software needed is there too.

DCA VERDICT

★★★★★

GOOD: Bargain basement price that fortunately comes with good performance for both CDs and DVDs

BAD: The software is fairly simple and DVD reading showed some erratic performance; plus it's USB2 only

DCA CONCLUSION

Lite-On and Freecom were the clear winners here. The other entrants wallowed in mediocrity, with just the occasional plus point to consider, while they shone brightly. Freecom's drive is expensive and if you've already got a copy of Nero, Easy CD or similar, it's probably not worth the extra cash. If the software will prove useful however, Media Creator is a great package and the addition of Toast for Mac OS is a very welcome bonus. If you own both a PC and Apple Mac, the bundle will be very much appreciated.

The software would be useless if the drive wasn't up to the job, but the FX-50 offers rapid performance for both reading and writing discs. Lite-On is a great choice for everyone else. Its low cost puts it close to the standard price of an internal drive now, with the added flexibility of owning an external writer. It's also capable of burning discs at a speed that matches the more expensive drives and includes all the basic software you'd need to get started with your back-up jobs.

Samsung was a close third place and certainly should not be ignored if you find it at a reduced price. HP and LG bought its own unique features to the party, with LightScribe labelling and DVD-RAM support respectively, but unless you have a specific need for either of these extras there's no compelling reason to go for them over the Freecom, Samsung or Lite-On. Sony's DRX-720UL proved to be a disappointment, with a price tag that was second only to the Freecom FX-50, but without the performance to match.



SPECIFICATIONS

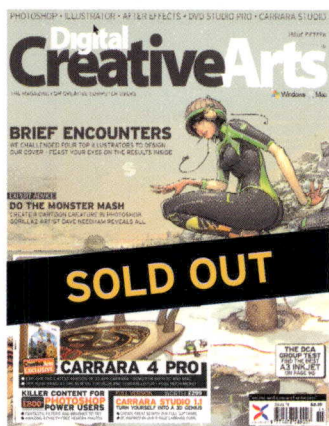
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	Sony DRX-720UL	HP DVD640e	LG 16x Super Multi	Samsung TS-E552	Freecom FX-50	Lite-On 1653SX
Price	£77	£64	£66	£59	£90	£47
Web	www.sony.co.uk	www.hp.co.uk	http://uk.lge.com	www.samsung.co.uk	www.freecom.com	www.liteon.com
Connections	USB2, IEEE 1394	USB2, firewire	USB2, dual Firewire	USB2	USB2, dual Firewire	USB2
DVD read	16x	16x	16x	16x	16x	16x
DVD+R	16x	16x	16x	16x	16x	16x
DVD+RW	8x	4x	8x	4x	4x	4x
DVD-R	16x	8x	6x	16x	16x	12x
DVD-RW	6x	4x	6x	4x	4x	4x
DVD+R DL	4x	2.4x	4x	4x	4x	4x
CD Read	48x	40x	40x	40x	48x	48x
CD-R	48x	40x	40x	40x	48x	48x
CD-RW	24x	24x	24x	32x	24x	24x
Accessories	USB & FireWire, LightScribe media	USB & FireWire lead	USB and FireWire leads	USB2 leads, DVD+R, CD-R	USB lead, 2 x FireWire	USB lead stand
Software	Nero Burning ROM	Sonic Record Now,, PowerDVD ArcSoft Showbiz, Muvee Autoproducer 3	Nero Express, PowerDVD	Pinnacle Instant CD/DVD 8	Easy Media Creator DVDMax Player, Toast	Nero Express 6
Rating	★★	★★★	★★★★	★★★	★★★★★	★★★★

BACK ISSUES

Catch up on everything you've missed by ordering back issues of the planet's most exciting magazine for digital creatives...



ISSUE FIFTEEN

Explore how professional illustrators tackle the creative brief in our DCA design face-off. We've also got fantastic workshops for Photoshop, Illustrator, After Effects, DVD Studio Pro and Carrara Studio too.

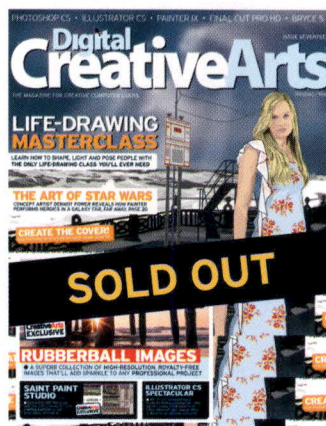
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Go comic crazy as expert artist Dave Gibbons shows you how to create our cover and reveals the tricks of the comic book trade. Also, we explore how the digital effects of today will impact on the movies of tomorrow.

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ISSUE SEVENTEEN

Get anatomically correct as we dive into the world of creating people with a masterclass in Painter portraiture, and the chance to Create the Cover in Illustrator CS. There's a Bryce cityscape tutorial too, and much, much more.

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ISSUE EIGHTEEN

Dive into the freelance world with our comprehensive guide to going it alone. Find out everything you need to know about Creative Suite 2, and try out our pixel art workshop too. Plus, find out how to improve your DV editing.

ON THE CD: Check out the PLE of Alias Studio 12, plus the brand new demo of Vue Pro Studio 5
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ISSUE NINETEEN

Get your type right, as we find out how you can manipulate emotion with design and build your own fonts too. Plus, what Matthew Carter thinks of the current type scene and all the details on *Revenge of the Sith* too.

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ISSUE TWENTY

Our Photoshop guide reveals how creative professionals use the imaging app. Plus, how to Create the Cover, the best ways to use Live Trace and Live Paint in Illustrator CS, and the option to try character animation with 3ds max.

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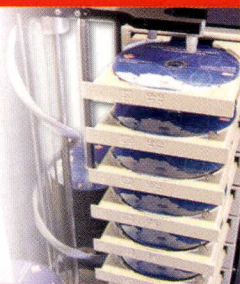
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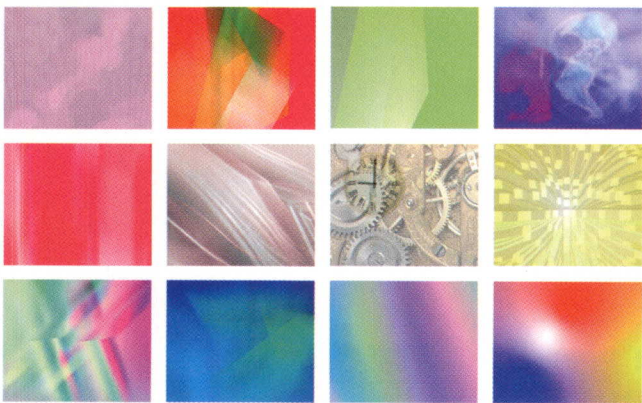
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On your free CD

Your guide to the quality contents on this issue's DCA CD

STUART DIXON: Deputy Digital Projects Manager

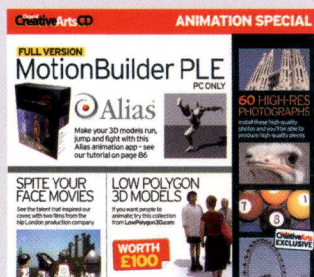
WELCOME TO DCA 21



Here we go again with another CD that's filled to the brim with the best content for our devoted readers. Those lovely people at Alias have been good to you this month, as they've given us the PLE version of MotionBuilder. As you probably know, PLE stands for Personal Learning Edition, which means you're getting a full version that's free to use for non-commercial projects.

For a bit of fun and inspiration, the guys over at Spite Your Face have kindly offered us a couple of their movies to show on this issue's disc too, so load them up before you do anything else. We fell in love with their humour and style the moment we saw the movies, which is why we got them to design the cover for this issue of *Digital Creative Arts* too. Find out what all the fuss is about, by checking out the two little gems that grace this fair disc.

Elsewhere on the CD you will find a set of human models from www.lowpolygon3d.com, 60 high-res stock images and a set of brushes, swatches and styles for Illustrator courtesy of GraphicXTRAS. If you're more into your video editing, we have trial versions of more than 175 plug-ins, as well as the usual list of top resources and files to accompany the tutorials in the mag. Enjoy!



ON THE CD

Whenever you see this logo in the magazine, you can find resource files on the cover CD for that particular page

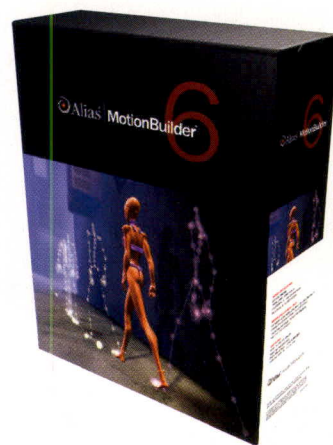
Alias MotionBuilder PLE

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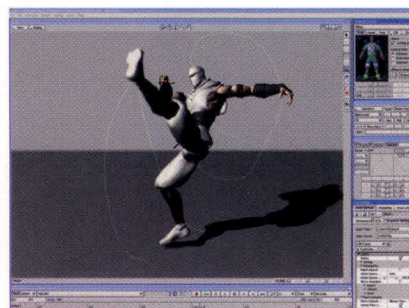
When you want software that produces exceptional animation, then you need to take a peak at what the professionals are using. You'll then quickly find out how much it costs to buy the software the pros are using, and probably be so startled that you'll never investigate the costs again.

Or perhaps you know some animation software inside out but want another package under your belt. Or employers are looking for skills in Alias software before they will take you on, or maybe you just want a challenge that will help you flex those creative muscles of yours. Whatever the reason, you should put your wallet away, (for the time being anyway) and install the copy of Alias MotionBuilder PLE that we have on the cover CD for you. Featuring nigh on every single feature of MotionBuilder Standard, which includes advanced real-time



technology, a unique story timeline performance environment, auto rigging, motion editing, motion layering, storytelling tools; as well as a host of other tools to speed up your animation and add the professional touch to any project you happen to be working on.

Being able to use this software without barriers means that with a little dedication you can learn the program inside out without having to spend a penny. Of course you can soon upgrade if you want to by heading over to the site. You'll also need to head to that destination to register the PLE. Use the link www.alias.com/eng/login/enquiries/ple_unlock_mb/index.html to avoid hours and hours of fruitless searching.



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It is said that kids who play with Lego turn out to be very creative when they grow up. Spielberg is apparently one such kid, and he went on to be one of the most creative people of the 20th Century. But what about the children who grow up and are still playing with Lego? For a living!

While trivialising slightly, the guys at Spite Your Face Productions do spend a good portion of their time building and animating with the yellow stuff, and the magical results of two of these projects can be found on the CD this issue. Taking various popular movies and then giving them a unique spin has made SYP Productions big news in the world of animation.

Spite Your Face isn't all about animation though, and the team also offer their services in the world of illustration and character design. So, while your first port of call should be the DCA CD to view two of the Spite Your Face masterpieces, the second should be the team's website, where you can see a few more of their films and find out other information too if you want to. When you sit down to watch the films, not only will you marvel at the incredible animation and piece by piece

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[Click here to watch our latest film, Spider-Man: The Peril of Doc Ock](#)

NEWS

Dec 2004 - Peril of Doc Ock alternate ending revealed!
The special edition of our LEGO Spider-Man movie, with new music video ending, is finally online! Find out more and watch the film [here](#).

Dec 2004 - Holy Grail article and downloadable movie
Pythelint, the official Monty Python site, now features an [article](#) about the making of our short *Monty Python and the Holy Grail in LEGO*, including new high quality quicktime reviews of the film which you can download.

Oct 2004 - Illustration Gallery Update
[See artwork](#) by SYP Director Tony Mines in the Illustration Galleries.

Sept 2004 - How to animate the Spite Your Face way!
The September 04 issue of UK magazine *Digital Video Made Easy* contains a 2-page interview with Spite Your Face Productions about the making of *The Peril of Doc Ock* and shooting digital stop-motion generally. *The Peril of Doc Ock* and our *Demons Road* are included on the cover disk in DVX and MPEG formats.

reconstruction involved, but you will also laugh, and laugh hard for that matter - so don't say we didn't warn you up front.

Spite Your Face are Tony Mines, Tim Drage, Chi Mason, Cat Johnston, Luke Turney and Peter Moran. They work together in London and all have specific skills to offer potential clients. To see more of their work online (as well as link to their individual portfolios) pop to www.spiteyourface.com and visit.

CD information

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Loading the CD

WINDOWS

We support Windows 2000 and XP unless otherwise stated.

MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS:

Screen resolution of 1,024 X 768 or higher.

Preferably with Macromedia Flash Player 5 or higher, Internet Explorer 5.5 or higher installed.

The CD-ROM interface should autorun once entered into your CD Drive, however, if it does not, please follow the instructions below.

1. Double-click My Computer.
2. Right-click on your relevant CD drive and select Open from the drop-down list.
3. Read the readme.txt if present to find out which file you need to launch to run the interface. Note this file is normally 'Start.exe', but there may be exceptions.

If you have problems running the interface, all of the contents are available on the disc and can be reached by following the method above and opening the relevant folders (ie Software folder for all of the software).

MACINTOSH

We support OS X unless otherwise stated

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Screen resolution of 1,024 X 768 or higher.

Preferably with Macromedia Flash Player 5 or higher, Internet Explorer 5.5 or higher installed.

This CD-ROM interface will NOT autorun when placed into your CD drive. Please follow the instructions below to run this CD.

1. Double-click on the CD icon that will appear on your Desktop.
2. Read the readme file, if present, to find out which file you need to launch to run the interface.

If you have problems running the interface, all of the contents are available on the disc and can be reached by following the method above and opening the relevant folders (ie Software folder for all of the software).

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In the event that your CD has arrived to you faulty or damaged in any way, please contact the address below for a free replacement. Be sure to state the magazine title, issue number and your full name and postal address with any correspondence.

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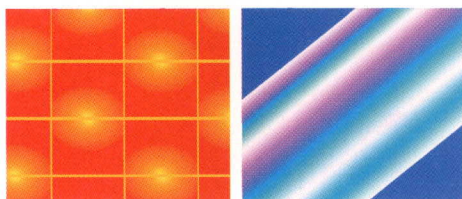
Email: subs@paragon.co.uk

Similarly, you can contact this same address if your disc is missing when you purchase the magazine

Correction: John Baynham

Now, we have a little apology to make regarding the cover disc on issue 20 of *Digital Creative Arts*. It included a great motion background from John Baynham, but it also included a few mistakes in the contact details. Of course, mistakes in *DCA* are about as common as seeing a unicorn racing a flying pig, so we thought we'd make amends now.

First off, the web address is actually www.jbproyaltyfree.co.uk and not JBPVideo.com as we previously stated. Secondly, John Baynham has kindly provided us with a great reader offer that we didn't cover in the last issue, a saving of £30 on a three DVD set. This offer is exclusively for *DCA* readers, so if you are interested in taking it up, more information can be found in the JBP advert on page 107. John Baynham's motion



backgrounds are also featured in Resources this month, so head to page 14 to check out some of the amazing products on offer. Once again, we offer our apologies to John Baynham and our readers of course, but needless to say we will endeavour to make sure that such a slip-up does not occur again. Please note that the backgrounds cannot be found on this issue's disk, so if you want them you'll have to head to the site!

Sapphire plug-ins

"We used Sapphire plug-ins to create many looks for *Spider-Man* that would have been nearly impossible to achieve otherwise," says Christian Boudman of Sony Pictures Imageworks.

Genarts launched the Sapphire plug-ins in 1996, which has since then burgeoned into one of the staple plug-in packages for the film and video industry. The package offers a collection of more than 175 image processing and synthesis effects and work with almost all editing systems including After Effects, Premiere, Final Cut Pro, Xpress Pro and many more. With the ability to transform any digital footage, these plug-ins are resolution-independent and include multi-processor support for faster rendering. Going to www.genarts.com will let you find out any more details you need. Effects include Glows, Glint, EdgeRays, LensFlare, Blurs and RackDefocus, plus more exotic effects like Lightning.



Graphicxtras.com

Graphicxtras.com is a hub of all things Photoshop and has been since 1995. Selling a wide variety of plug-ins to the most demanding of Photoshop users, the site also features information, tutorials, graphic products and some free plug-ins.

The CD has a selection of top extras that includes brushes, styles and swatches for you to try before you go to the site for the full versions. With so many different add-ons available in one place, it's a tough site to browse without wanting to get the credit card out and go crazy. There are frequent updates to the site and the store, so it's worth checking back to see what's new and, more importantly, if there any offers available, of which there are many. Discounts are also available, so it's worth checking those out, for as much as 25% off purchases. One of the latest advances to the Graphicxtras site is the addition of RSS, so now you can get up-to-the-minute information from the company as and when it happens.



(C) 2005 ANN COTT

Full index

THE FULL CONTENTS OF THIS ISSUE'S CD

SOFTWARE

Alias MotionBuilder PLE
(Non commercial use)
www.alias.co.uk
PC

PLUG-INS

Sapphire video editing plug-ins (Trial)
www.genarts.com
PC **MAC**

GraphicXTRAS (Trial)
www.graphicxtras.com
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www.spiteyourface.com
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www.lowpolygon3d.com
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PROJECT FILES

038-044 Mix 2D and 3D in Photoshop

048-053 Create a chocolate wrapper

058-064 Design your own dragon

066-072 Rough up your Illustrator artwork

080-085 Bluescreen on a budget

086-090 Animate with MotionBuilder



If you have any problems with the *DCA* CD; call our CD helpdesk on 01202 200259 - this line is open every Wednesday between 2pm and 6pm

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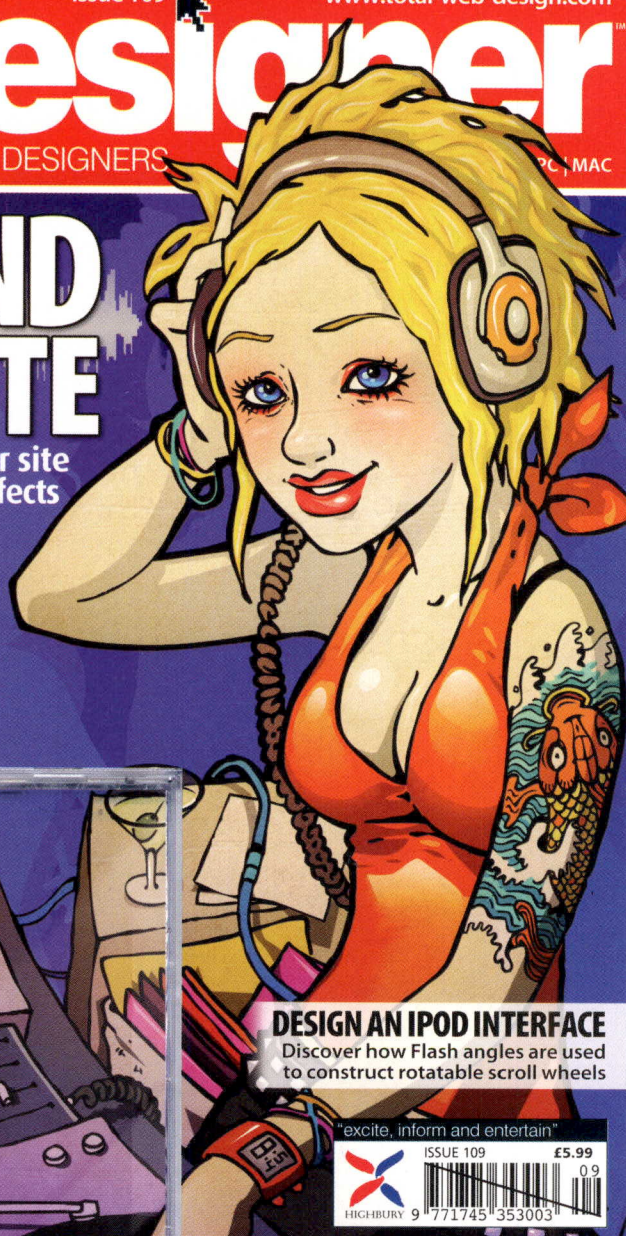
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A day in the life of...

CHARLOTTE BAVASSO



THROUGH A FLURRY OF SHOWREELS, EMAILS AND PHONE CALLS TO FRANCE, CHARLOTTE REVEALS WHAT RUNNING A PRODUCTION COMPANY IS REALLY LIKE

8.00AM I wake up to the *Today* programme and check my emails. I'm ready to leave home by 9.24.

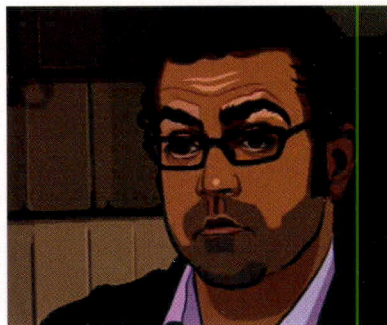
9.25AM I order a cappuccino downstairs at Apostrophe. It's Friday, so they give it to me for free. It's special treatment for sure, but you could say that I did help fund their nine other London branches. I walk to the office while chatting away to one of our neighbours.

9.27AM Arrive at the office, almost set the alarm off (too many codes in this world) and check my emails again. I am on the phone a lot with Paris because I also look after the French lot on our roster.

10.20AM Time for an internal meeting. We talk about new directors and Nexus' global domination... These days we get very excited by feature films, commercials and music videos, or maybe it's buying art



● The now famous 'Grrr' ad for Honda is something Nexus can really be proud of



● Being animation specialists allows Nexus to get involved in the projects from all over the world

with our pension fund. It's a new subject, and it's still unclear whether you can actually hang the art in the office.

2.00PM I have watched five reels by now, seen the work of one new director we really like, looked at a few production contracts and budgets and eaten too much Toblerone that someone brought back from their 10-day trip to Thailand. Somehow we seem to get this whatever the holiday. Realise I better get lunch and then come straight back for more emails.

2.30PM Meet with a great new director showing his work. It's always exciting when you meet new talent.

3.30PM I discuss current projects with Smith & Foulkes and Bessy & Combe. Then I speak to a couple of agencies. This is mixed with looking at suggested festival entries and other PR issues.

5.00PM Next I have to speak to our representatives in the States about a new project for Kuntzel + Deygas. From this I discover that the US agency has screened 56 reels for a 30-second soft drink commercial. Suddenly I hear a cry asking if anyone wants tea in the office and I quickly raise my hand.

6.00PM Realise that I never got my tea. We start looking at all the Nexus showreels and start to make changes.

7.00PM I really have to go but need to catch up on the work in progress we are sending. It's looking amazing and I am very very proud of them all. It really makes my day.

8.00PM After the last phone call with the Paris lot, I run home, drop my computer off and go straight out again to meet some friends at their house. We drink a bit too much wine and leave - very happy - in the early hours of the morning.

NEXUS PRODUCTIONS

Nexus is an animation production company that was founded in 1997 by Chris O'Reilly and Charlotte Bavasso. Its first commission was the creation of material for the world's largest TV screen on U2's 'Pop Mart' tour. Nexus now has an international roster of acclaimed directors, who work in film, TV, commercials, music videos and more. Nexus's extensive credits include the multi award-winning Honda 'Grrr', the title sequence for *Catch Me If You Can* and comedy sketches for *Monkey Dust*. See www.nexuslondon.com for more on the many Nexus projects.

QUICK DRAW

Q: How would you describe yourself in five words?

A: All or nothing. Usually all

Q: Who is your idol?

A: It is definitely not Tom Cruise

Q: What's your favourite film?

A: It is not *Top Gun*

Q: What's the biggest cliché in the creative world?

A: Michael Winner

Q: What would be your Plan B career?

A: Doing something worthy I suppose



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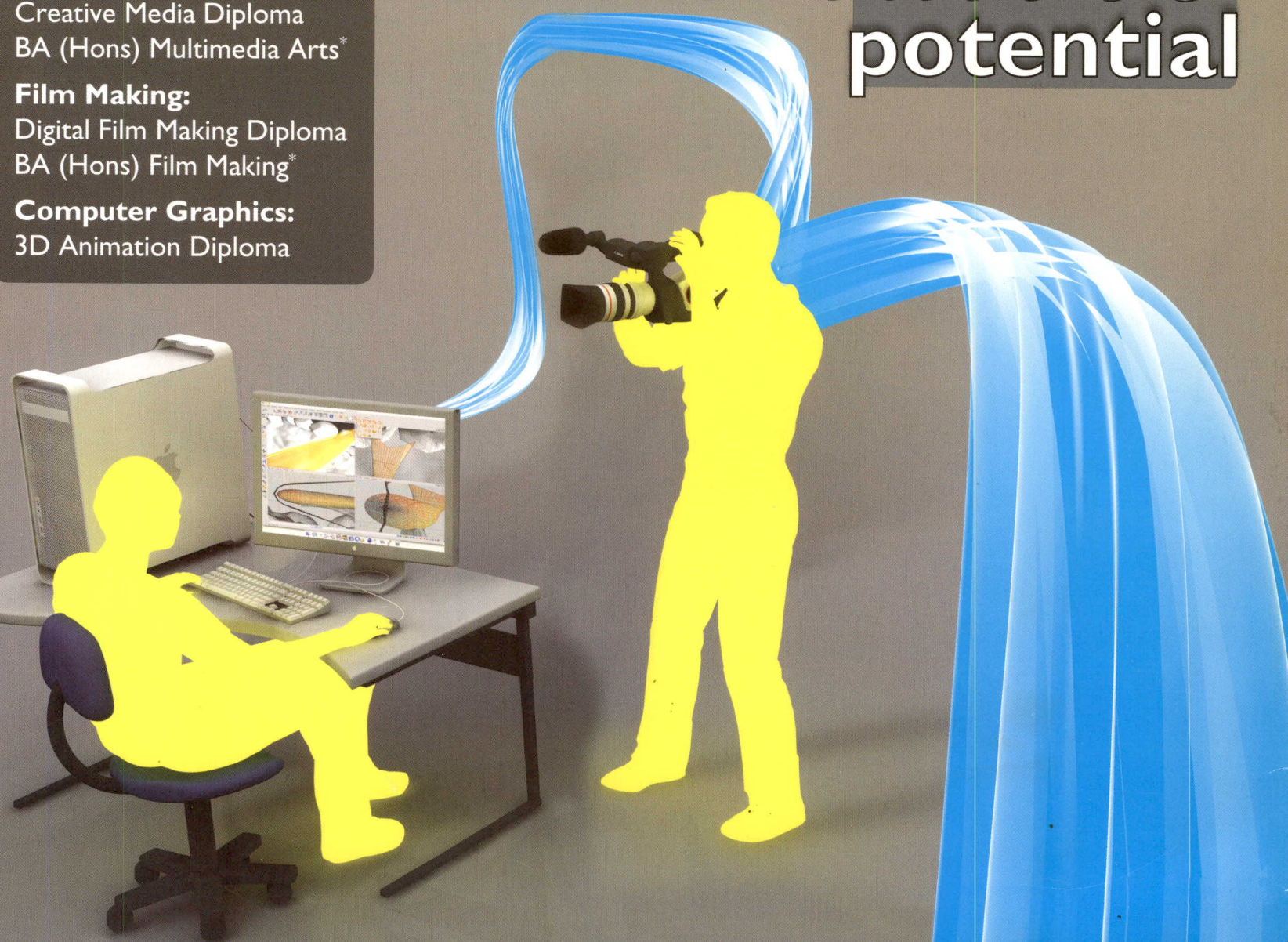
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